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ABSTRACT

The changing face of further education (FE) college governance in England and Wales was examined in a study that included the following activities: (1) a survey of 447 FE colleges across England and Wales (response rate, 55%) to identify the composition and operation of governing bodies, proposed changes, perceived developmental needs; and areas of good practice; (2) a survey of individual governors of a sample of 50 colleges; and (3) visits to 9 colleges. The following were among the key findings: (1) changes in governing bodies' composition have been gradual and generally in line with expectations; (2) the conduct of corporation business has become more rigorous, bringing increased pressures on workload; (3) the focus of governance has shifted toward colleges' educational character, direction, and performance as opposed to finance, personnel, and property; (4) levels of governor commitment and fulfillment are generally high; and (5) most governing bodies reported having additional work to do before feeling fully and justifiably confident in their ability to oversee their colleges' core educational role. (Seventeen tables/figures are included. The bibliography lists 18 references. The college and governors' survey instruments are appended along with breakdowns of the responses to them and the checklist of interview questions for the college visits.) (MN)

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The changing face of college governance

Peter Davies

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The changing face of college governance

Peter Davies

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Preface and acknowledgements

This report arises from the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) research project on 'the changing face of college governance'. This was a major study, undertaken in 2000 and 2001, which aimed to establish how the make-up and operation of governing bodies was changing in response to the government's agenda for raising the standards of stewardship and accountability, and the reformed requirements for governing body membership. The project also aimed to identify effective practice and review the associated developmental needs of governors.

In undertaking this work, LSDA acknowledges the considerable assistance received from chairs and members of governing bodies at participating colleges, as well as clerks to corporations and members of college management teams. Without their help, this report would not have been possible.

Project team

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Summary of findings

Background of project

- This research project covered a two-year period in which significant changes affected the composition, operations and priorities of governing bodies. Its primary objectives were to examine the responses to the changed requirements for governing bodies introduced from 1 August 1999. At the time of our surveys, corporations were in the process of transition in their responses to the changed requirements placed upon them.

- With few exceptions, the data emerging from the research project was common across all the main categories of college.

Membership

- Changes in the composition of governing bodies have been gradual, and generally in line with expectations. The most obvious indications were the reduction in the percentage of business governors, and the increase in local authority and community governor membership.

- There has been a slight increase in the percentage of female governors, and of those from ethnic minority backgrounds, albeit affecting a minority of colleges in the period since August 1999. This trend looks set to continue as other corporations indicated that adjustments to the gender and ethnicity balance of their membership were among future recruitment priorities.

- There has also been a slight downward adjustment in the typical age profile. Again, this trend appears likely to continue. However, the age of a clear majority of governors remained at over 50, and there was little evidence that the proportion of retired governors has decreased to any noticeable extent, or would do so in the future.

- There were clear indications that corporations were sensitive to government concerns that colleges should focus on serving the needs of their local communities. Search committees usually appeared to have a clear vision of the desired profile of membership towards which they were working. There were frequently expressed concerns about the lack of direct input to governing bodies from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), unskilled or semi-skilled workers, or the unemployed.

- Outside many sixth form colleges, parent governors were not usually present within the formal establishment of the membership of corporations. Nonetheless, there were many other instances where members belonging to another formal category were also parents of current or past students of the colleges concerned.

- Reported levels of the expertise present within governing bodies in the areas of education, finance and business management provided reassurance that corporations are generally qualified to undertake their role. The increases in

community needs and local authority planning expertise were in line with the government's intention to alter governing-body composition to achieve greater accountability to the local community.

- There has been a growth of open, transparent, and rigorous governor recruitment and selection procedures.

- Many chairs and individual governors – especially business governors – would prefer governing bodies to have a significantly smaller membership, with the aim of expediting business and furthering collective responsibility. Most also recognised, though, that the minimum demands of committee membership, plus the need to reflect the make-up of the local community, led inevitably to a total membership at, or very near to, that of their current establishment.

Operation

- The conduct of corporation business has become more rigorous, bringing increased pressures on workload. Most corporations reported increases in the number of their formal or *ad hoc* committees. Many individual governors attended more than 10 meetings per year.

- Most corporations felt that they had now got to grips with financial, personnel and property issues. Other evidence suggests that the time that corporations devote to educational matters will increase without a commensurate reduction in other areas.

- Taken overall, the most frequently convened committees were those dealing with finance, audit and standards. Working groups and *ad hoc* committees typically included those dealing with:

    - curriculum and quality issues
    - students
    - staff
    - employer links
    - equal opportunities
    - property.

- Attendance levels at meetings were impressively high. Reports of problems in achieving a quorate meeting were relatively rare, though pressures in terms of workload and responsibility were said to be a factor in some resignations, and to add to problems of recruitment.

- There was widespread opposition to the introduction of any general system of remuneration for individual governors. However, there was a more mixed reaction to the possibility of payment of honoraria to committee chairs, and to governors effectively performing unpaid consultancy work for corporations.

- The combination of the increased rigour in the conduct of governance and the knock-on effects on workload have led to a greater focus on the nature of the relationship between a corporation and its committees. Based on our research,

- the preferred approach would be that which entails the papers scrutinised by a committee being presented a second time to the full corporation, along with a note that summarises the committee's deliberations and conclusions.

- Other features of effective practice in the conduct of meetings of the corporation were:

    - efficient and effective use of committees to deal with detail, to make recommendations, and to direct the attention of the board to the key aspects over which it needs to maintain scrutiny
    - clearly presented paperwork, with concise covering notes that flag the decisions required and direct attention to specific aspects of the detail of papers already considered in committee that also call for close scrutiny by the full corporation
    - proactive chairing, combining expedition of business with the active involvement of all members, the drawing out of minority viewpoints, identification and resolution of disagreement, and a clear summary of decisions and action points
    - building on challenging comments and questions from members to identify the subject of follow-up action and reporting at future meetings
    - provision of a calendar of corporation and committee meeting dates, with key decision points and information needs flagged in advance.

- There was evidence of scrupulous and open procedures for assembling the agendas for meetings of corporations, based round effective and professional relationships between chairs, clerks and principals. In many cases, the agenda followed a standard pattern, based round the reports from committees and linked to the annual cycle of business. The relative absence of proactive 'trawling' for agenda items with individual governors suggests that this is one area where procedures might still be tightened.

- Many clerks reported an increase over time in their workload and responsibilities. In general, clerking support to governance took up less time in sixth form colleges than in general FE/tertiary colleges. The current role of the clerk is far broader and more demanding than that of simply providing efficient administrative support. Corporations look to their clerks for regular advice on the legal and ethical conduct of their affairs. Clerks also play a pivotal role in ensuring efficient and effective relationships between a corporation, its committees, and the college's management team. Effective clerking plays a major role in ensuring that the flow of associated information is both timely and appropriate.

Roles and responsibilities

- There has been a general change in the priorities of governance to focus more on the educational character, direction and performance of the college, as opposed to the hitherto dominant 'organisational business' issues of finance, personnel and property – though these, of course, remain important. During the project, most colleges were in a process of transition: organisational business issues were perceived to have occupied more of the time and energy of

corporations in the past; educational issues had now come to the fore, and it was thought they would occupy a pole position in the future. Few governors, however, felt that organisational business issues would in future warrant significantly less time and attention than at present. The challenges facing corporations could therefore increase, requiring efficiency gains if workload is to be contained.

- In general, corporations appeared to have taken on board the Standards Agenda and the need to oversee teaching and learning. Most, though, considered that they still have some way to go before they have fully developed systems and procedures in place for evaluating educational performance, coupled with the necessary levels of governor experience and expertise. Educational matters represented the area in which many governors felt least 'expert', and where they were least confident about observing the demarcation between the roles of governor, manager and teacher.

- Problems in getting to grips with educational performance issues were compounded by difficulties in defining and then obtaining the type of information that would enable corporations to agree appropriate targets and to monitor performance against them. However, there were signs of improvements in the quality of the reports being presented to corporations. Confidence in monitoring academic performance, target setting and benchmarking appeared to be growing.

- Governing bodies were increasingly concerned with the college's 'curriculum offer', and a number of governing bodies now have a rigorous engagement with strategic curriculum planning. The concerns of a minority of governors suggested some continuing need to improve the quality of market research evidence presented to them, so that they were able to make a proper assessment of the match of the curriculum with community or employer needs.

- Governing bodies were also concerned that they should be able to demonstrate value for money in the services they provided to their surrounding communities. This concern appeared to reinforce the sense of corporate collective responsibility. There was little evidence of a view that individual business or community governors were seeking to serve the interests of narrow sections.

- In the case of staff, student, and local authority governors, there were a few instances where some of the individuals concerned appeared in the eyes of other governors to act in a representational rather than corporate manner. There were also instances where the Instruments and Articles of Governance might have been interpreted too rigidly, excluding staff governors from discussions in which they did not feel themselves compromised from playing a proper corporate role.

Governor assessment and development

- Corporations took self-assessment seriously and most governors appeared to value the experience, and to believe that the self-critical approach that it had fostered had sharpened the performance of their boards. The annual 'away day'

review sessions, typically associated with governor self-assessment, were well regarded.

- Some corporations considered developmental needs holistically, rather than as an aggregate of individual governor requirements. This is likely to have implications for the way training needs analyses are conducted in future.

- There was evidence of governing bodies' concern to demonstrate specific ways in which governors 'added value'. This played a key part in sharpening the challenging, yet supportive, role played by governing bodies vis-à-vis college managements. A remaining problem in the self-assessment of governance was the relatively underdeveloped state of benchmarking with the operations of other corporations. However, mechanisms such as clerks' networks (usually based regionally) appeared to provide an effective opportunity for sharing good practice. Joint sessions with other governing bodies are also a possible way forward.

- There were some anomalies regarding future priorities for governor expertise and development between the collective 'official response' from colleges and that from individual governors. In the former, finance still emerged as the most common priority area for strengthening the expertise of boards; in the latter, marketing and community needs were most commonly identified. However, finance was the area most commonly flagged by individual governors as a *personal* developmental need, though in most cases this seemed to be a reflection of a perceived need to attain a better grasp of the intricacies of the funding mechanism. Next most commonly identified were educational issues.

- Questionnaire surveys of individual governors were used regularly to identify development and training needs, and to design a related support programme. Induction represented a steep learning curve for many new governors and meeting the needs of individuals with different levels of experience and expertise was a continuing challenge.

- At most colleges, the majority of governors were involved in some formal training activities – both in-house and 'open' events – and were generally satisfied with their value. The absence of large-scale demand for any single area of development raised problems in mounting cost-effective training events. The calls on time that training entails meant that actual activity fell some way below what was required to meet perceived needs.

- Opportunities for continuous self-development were seen as crucial to the furtherance of relevant experience and expertise. Most governors believed that their understanding of key educational issues would be enhanced by greater contact with staff and students. They were conscious that this must be achieved in ways that avoided the bypassing of colleges' line-management arrangements. In consequence, governor attendance at open days, award ceremonies and social events had increased. Feedback from staff and student governors indicated that this trend was welcomed.

- More formal arrangements, via departmental attachments, or attendance at meetings with staff and students, tended to affect fewer governors. Evidence of their effectiveness was mixed. Work shadowing of staff and observation of lessons were regarded as worthwhile by a high proportion of the minority of governors involved. These are areas that we would recommend reviewing, given the need for governors to familiarise themselves with the core business of the college – the educational experience of the learners for whom it caters.

- The wider availability of governor support programmes and advice and guidance materials was beginning to have a beneficial impact on the knowledge of individual governors and the performance of governing bodies.

The face of governance today

- Generally speaking, our research showed that there were high levels of governor commitment and fulfilment. A large majority of the governors were satisfied that they made a worthwhile contribution, and that the boards on which they sat were, in general, performing effectively. Fulfilment in the role was at its highest where governors were most satisfied with the quality of the information that boards received concerning the performance of the college, the use made of their own expertise, and the clarity and appropriateness of the strategic direction of the corporation.

- Governors were characterised by long-standing interest and involvement in community service, and the associated role of education and training. There was little evidence of individuals being motivated primarily by the wish to further a particular cause or sectional interest.

- There were clear concerns about the burdens of workload and responsibility, and frequent complaints about the volume of paperwork. The other most commonly expressed irritation was with the perceived 'accountability overkill' that interfered to an unnecessarily high degree with the independence of corporations. Many governors felt that the majority of corporations were being penalised in this way because of the failings of a few.

- Overall, we conclude that governance has changed in the broad directions intended by government and funding councils – albeit in many cases, there is still some way to go before the transition is complete. The profile and balance in the membership of some governing bodies is still out of kilter with the ideal. Most corporations are still getting to grips with educational issues. Despite these caveats, most governors believed that the changes have in general served to improve the quality of governance.

- The majority of corporations have now developed a critical and challenging approach commensurate with proper and rigorous governance. Relationships with college managements are generally supportive, open and trusting. A more challenging style of governance has placed management teams on their mettle, to the benefit of all concerned.

Priorities for the future

- While governing bodies are, in general, progressing in the right direction, there is still work to do before most will feel fully and justifiably confident of their ability to oversee the core educational role of the college. Readers are referred specifically to key sources that are especially relevant to issues concerned with the experiences and outcomes of learners:

    - *Improving student performance: how English further education colleges can improve student retention and achievement* (National Audit Office 2001), which provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date evidence of the key factors that influence student performance.
    - *Improving student retention and achievement: what do we know and what do we need to find out?* (Martinez 2001), a concise and recent synopsis of the issues surrounding student retention and achievement.
    - *Raising standards in further education: the work of college governors* (FEFC 2000d), which remains a useful source of examples of good practice that inspectors found in the monitoring and improvement by governors of the quality of education and training.
    - *Using management information to raise standards* (FEFC 2001), a document that aims to contribute to the development of effective information systems by providing examples of good practice, focusing primarily on the use of management information systems (MIS) as they relate to students, their work and achievements.
    - *It's a people thing: demystifying college information* (Owen, Alterman and Walkley 2000), which provides a brief, straightforward, and jargon-free guide to good practice in management information.
    - *Targets: getting smarter* (Learning and Skills Council 2002), a brief guide to good practice in target setting, aimed at governors as well as college managements and staff.
    - *A college guide to benchmarking* (Owen 1999), a concise guide to systematic methods of improvement that utilise others' good practice to improve your own processes.

- If governing bodies are able to satisfy themselves, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and, in Wales, Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) that leadership and management are effective in raising achievement and in supporting all learners – the last of the seven questions in the Common Inspection Framework – then the right systems must be in place, operated by competent and well-directed management. The emphasis on governance that is concerned primarily with improved standards in general, and the interests of individual learners in particular, sets the clear direction for the future.

1 Background and aims of project

1.1 Context and aims

In the 1992 *Further and Higher Education Act*, the membership of governing bodies was originally designed to encourage and instil the discipline of the market into colleges by requiring a minimum 50% representation from business and industry. The intention was to ensure that colleges became more realistic and disciplined in their activities. This move towards a greater economic and business competitiveness produced, in turn, what has been referred to as a 'new managerialism'.

The decision to undertake this project was made at a time when the governance of colleges had become a matter of major importance to the government and the then Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) – in Wales, the Further Education Funding Council for Wales (FEFCW). Inspection reports had become increasingly critical about shortfalls in the performance of some governing bodies. Not least of these were the high-profile deficiencies highlighted at a number of colleges, which in turn prompted significant unfavourable media coverage. This led to a major reassessment of the operation of governance and its contribution to the sector. The emphasis on market orientation and managerial approaches, which characterised thinking in the years following incorporation in 1992, shifted to a more inclusive and collaborative approach emphasising the needs of local communities and individual learners. That shift was articulated in the reforms in the membership of corporations, as set out in *FEFC Circular 99/30* (FEFC 1999) (for England), and in the revised Instruments and Articles of Government, which were phased in from 1 August 1999. It signalled a move away from a market approach, towards a membership based upon a local community focus. (Arrangements for governance in Wales differ in detail from those in place in England, but follow broadly similar lines. In the text that follows, we have endeavoured to flag important differences, wherever they apply.)

Given this picture, we felt it would be helpful to clarify the nature of the composition and operation of governing bodies; the directions in which they had changed, and were proposing to change in response to the requirements for reform; and the extent to which actual changes represented the spirit of the requirements as well as the letter. Of key importance was the extent to which governing bodies could operate with the interests of the college at heart, or whether sectional interests prevailed. Additionally, we felt it would be valuable to examine the impact on the demarcation between governance and management of the FEFC Inspectorate's recommendations to give increased focus to academic matters and student achievement. It would also be useful to gather evidence on changes in the overall operation of governing bodies following reforms: for example, is the committee structure different? does a change from a 'business' to a 'stakeholder' model influence decision-making?, etc.

In parallel, there was a need to review the developmental needs of governors in the light of emerging patterns of operational behaviour, in order that corporations might receive further support in meeting the many challenges that face them.

This review took place against the background of *The college governor* publication (FEFC 2000a), issued to colleges in April 2000, the training materials available from June 2000 (FEFC 2000b) and the *Governance health check questionnaire* – a diagnostic tool published by the LSDA in 2001. In England, assistance with governor training costs was provided via the Standards Fund, as set out in *FEFC Circular 00/15* (2000c). Similar publications in Wales were supported by FEFC(W) (2000a and 2000b).

During the lifespan of the project, the Learning and Skills Councils (Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) in Wales) replaced the FEFCs for England and Wales as the colleges' funding bodies, with responsibilities spanning the whole of post-compulsory education and training outside higher education, and a new planning function. The effects of this change were yet to become fully apparent at the time the study was undertaken, but had important implications for governing bodies that also needed to be taken into account.

1.2 Project stages

The project was undertaken in three stages. Stage 1 involved a survey of colleges in England and Wales, in order to identify the composition and operation of governing bodies, proposed changes, perceived developmental needs and areas of good practice. Stage 2 then comprised a survey of individual governors at a sample of 50 colleges. Lastly, Stage 3 involved visits to nine colleges by members of LSDA's project team in order to conduct interviews with governors and other key staff, observe the operation of the governing body, identify good practice, and collect associated documentation.

2 Stage 1: survey of colleges

2.1 Methodology

A questionnaire survey of FE-sector colleges in England and Wales was undertaken during March and April 2000. A letter was sent in advance of the survey to the clerks to the corporations of all FE-sector institutions in England and Wales (copied to principals), explaining the project's aims, and seeking their cooperation. Questionnaires were then circulated on the same basis, excepting five colleges where a request was received to be excluded from the survey because of other pressures. An uncompleted copy of the questionnaire that was circulated can be found in **Appendix 1**. A full breakdown of the responses forms **Appendix 2**. As well as an overall breakdown, responses are also sub-divided by three types of college, according to the categorisation employed by FEFC, namely: *general FE and tertiary colleges; sixth form colleges* and *specialist colleges* (the last comprising an amalgamation of the FEFC categories *agriculture and horticulture colleges; art, design and performing arts colleges* and *specialist designated institutions).*

2.2 Profile of respondents

The breakdown of questionnaires despatched and responses received was as follows:

Type of college	Questionnaires despatched	Questionnaires returned	Response rate %
General FE/tertiary	292	175	60
Sixth form	106	54	51
Specialist	49	19	39
Total	**447**	**248**	**55**

As will be noted from the analysis that follows, there were relatively few instances where the breakdown of responses differed significantly according to the type of college. Nevertheless, given the lower response rate from specialist colleges, and the fact that this category was an amalgamation of institutions of very different character, findings specific to this sub-group should be treated with caution.

2.3 Composition of governing body

Overall

The mean (average) size of governing bodies in the colleges responding to the survey was 17.66, ranging from 17.5 in *general FE/tertiary colleges* to 18.26 in *specialist colleges.*

Gender

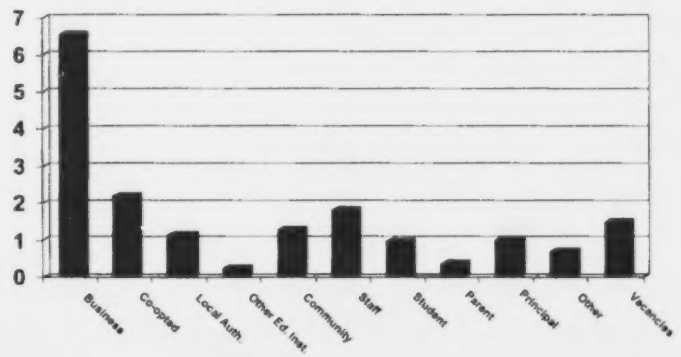
At the time of the survey, some 30% of governors were *female*. The proportion of female governors was highest in *sixth form colleges* (35%) and lowest in

specialist colleges (22%). Males outnumbered females in all categories except *staff, student* and *parent governors*.

Employment background

The largest individual category was *business* (37%) followed by *coopted* (12%), *staff* (10%), *community* (7%) and *local authority* (6%). On average, around 8% of governing body places were unfilled *vacancies*. The balance of employment backgrounds did not differ significantly by type of college, except that *sixth form colleges* typically had relatively smaller numbers of governors from *business* backgrounds, and relatively larger numbers of *parent* governors (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Composition of governing body:employment background
(mean (average) numbers)



In the period since 31 July 1999, the large majority of respondents (74%) reported a decrease in the number of *business* governors, and an increase in the numbers of *local authority* and *community* governors (74% and 60% respectively), in line with the changed requirements. Just under a third of respondents indicated an increase in the numbers of *coopted* and *student* governors.

Ethnicity

Just over 5% of governors in the colleges that responded to the survey were from ethnic minority backgrounds, some 60% of these being from *Asian* backgrounds. Governors from ethnic minority backgrounds were most common in *general FE/tertiary colleges*, and least common in *specialist colleges*.

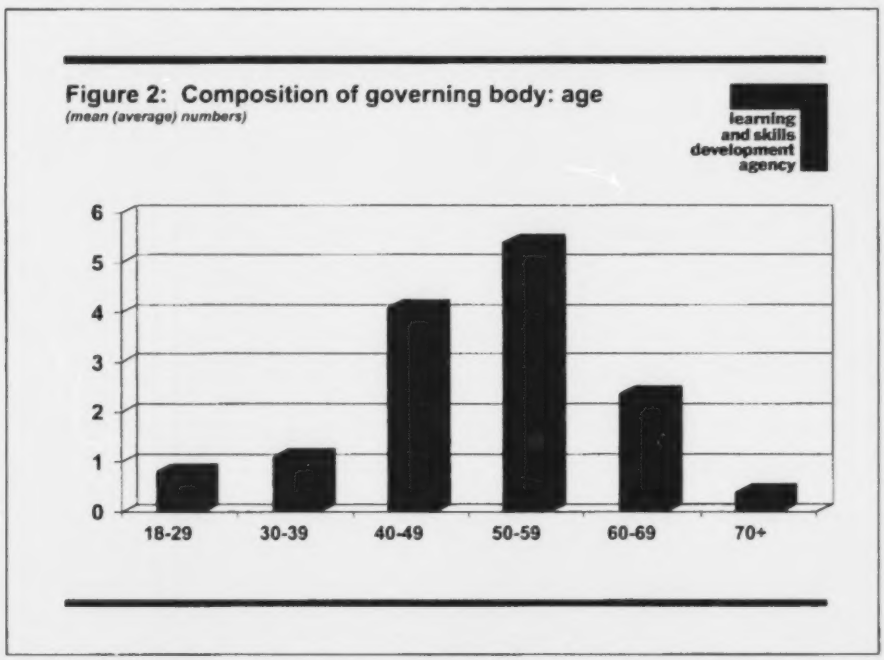
Around 13% of respondents reported an increase in the number of Asian governors since 31 July 1999, and 8% an increase in the numbers of Black governors.

Disability

Some 1% of governors in the responding colleges were registered disabled, involving a total of 41 of the 248 institutions involved.

Age

The large majority of governors were aged between *40* and *59*, with the majority of the remainder being *over 60* (Figure 2).



The age profile in *sixth form colleges* was younger than average, and that in *specialist colleges* older. Though the majority of respondents indicated that there had been *no change* in the age profile of their governing body since 31 July 1999, most of the remainder reported a shift towards the *younger age ranges*.

Employment status

Some 17% of governors in the colleges responding to the survey were *retired*. More than two-thirds of respondents (68%) indicated that their proportion of retired governors had *not changed* since 31 July 1999; a slight majority of the remainder recorded an *increase*.

Background of chair

Typically, governing-body chairs were *male* (88%), *White British* (98%), from a *business* background (78%), and aged between *50* and *69* (73%). Some 40% of chairs were *retired*. There were no instances of chairs with a *community* background.

Background of clerk

Over a third of the responding colleges reported that their clerk was a *college senior post holder* (38%), followed by an *external person* (29%), *other college senior manager* (19%) and *other member of staff* (15%). Only 1% reported that they were currently employing an *external clerking service*. Just under a fifth (19%) had a *deputy clerk*.

Anticipated changes over the next three years

The main areas where change was anticipated were in employment background (60%), gender (58%), ethnicity (42%) and age (37%). In the main, the changes that were anticipated were a *reduction* in the number of governors from *business* backgrounds, and an increase in *community, local authority* and *coopted* governors; an increase in the proportion of *females* and in those from *ethnic minority* backgrounds; and a *lowering of the age profile*.

Recruitment problems anticipated in achieving the desired composition of the governing body

The most commonly mentioned recruitment problem was the disincentive of what were perceived as excessive *time demands* (32%), followed by the *pressures of increased accountability* (18%). Some 9% mentioned the *lack of any tangible financial reward*. Almost two-thirds of the problems mentioned (61%) concerned *general or specific difficulties* in recruiting governors with the *desired backgrounds and/or skills*.

2.4 Meetings

Numbers

On average, the full governing body meets around *five* times per year (mean = 5.13). *Finance* committees (where applicable) met somewhat *more frequently* (5.78), but others *less* often.

Times

The most commonly reported times for meetings of the governing body were *late afternoon to early evening* (37%) and *evening* (42%).

Length

The large majority of meetings lasted between *2* and *3 hours* (78%), with 14% lasting *longer* and 9% demanding *less time*.

Attendance

Most governing-body meetings were attended by between *11* and *15* governors (72%), with 19% of respondents reporting an average attendance of *16–20*, and 9% of *10 or fewer*.

Inquorate meetings

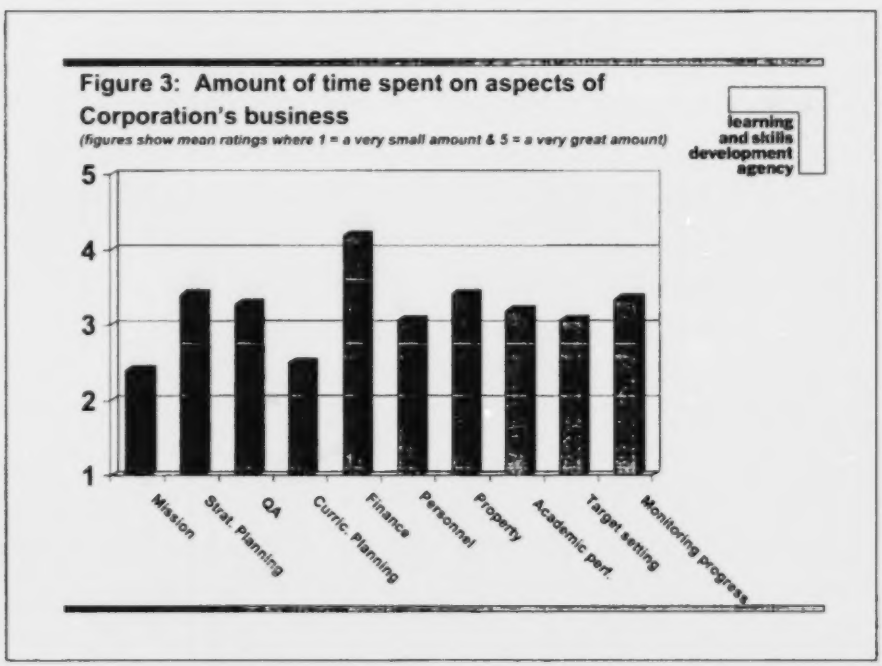
Some 10% of respondents reported that a meeting (or two meetings in 3% of replies) had had to be *postponed during 1999 because of the lack of a quorum*, and similar percentages reported meetings *becoming inquorate during the meeting*.

College working groups and ad hoc *committees*

The most commonly mentioned working groups and *ad hoc* committees on which governors served were: *quality assurance* (43%), *buildings and maintenance* (35%), *equal opportunities* (28%), *employer links* (23%), *student disciplinary procedures* (22%) and *curriculum policy* (21%). Only 8% reported governor involvement in committees or working groups dealing with *learning support*, and only 5% with *staff development*.

Time spent on the corporation's business

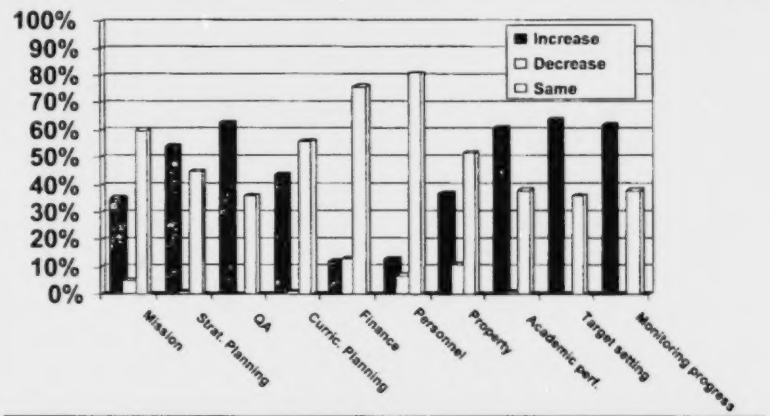
Respondents were asked to rate the amount of time that their governing body had spent on different aspects of the corporation's business on a five-point scale, where 1 = *a very small amount*, and 5 = *a very great amount*. The greatest time allocation by far was to *finance* (mean rating 4.20), followed by *property* (3.41) and *strategic planning* (3.40). The smallest amounts of time were devoted to *curriculum planning* (2.50) and *mission* (2.40) (Figure 3).



A majority of respondents anticipated that in the current year their governing body would devote more time to *target setting* (64%), *quality assurance* (63%), *monitoring college progress towards achieving targets* (62%), *evaluating*

academic performance (61%) and *strategic planning* (54%). The only areas in which more than 10% of respondents anticipated that decreasing amounts of time would be spent were *finance* (13%) and *property* (11%) (Figure 4).

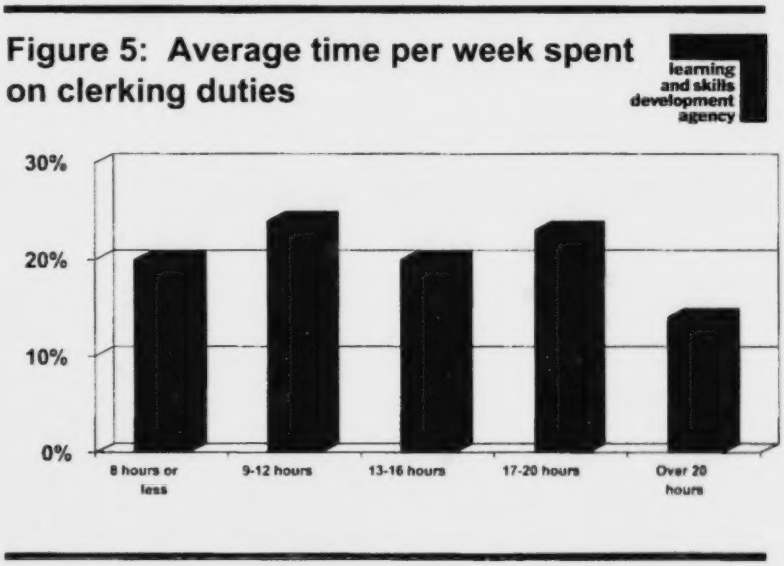
Figure 4: Anticipated changes in relative time spent by governing body



Time spent on clerking duties

Respondents indicated a wide range of average hours spent per week on clerking duties, ranging from *8 or less* (20%) to *more than 20* (14%), with a relatively even spread in between (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Average time per week spent on clerking duties

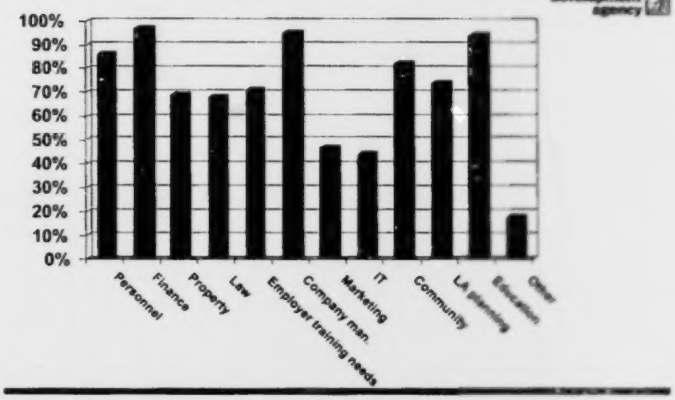


2.5 Governing body experience, expertise and development needs

Areas of experience present within governing body

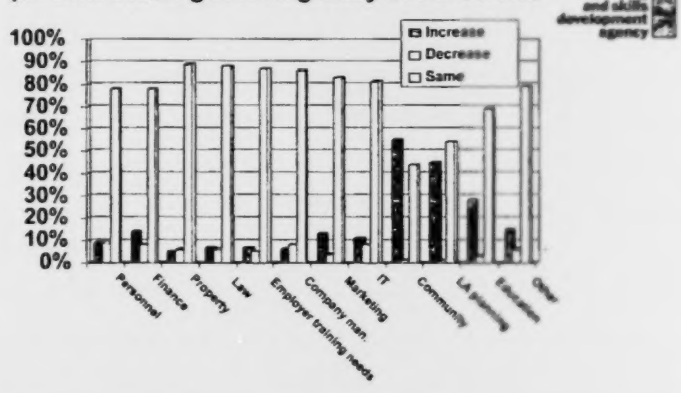
Most areas of experience were represented within the governing bodies of the large majority of respondents, the most common being *financial management* (97%), *company management* (95%), *education* (94%), *personnel management* (86%) and *community needs* (82%). The least well-represented areas were *marketing* (47%) and *IT* (44%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Areas of expertise present within governing body

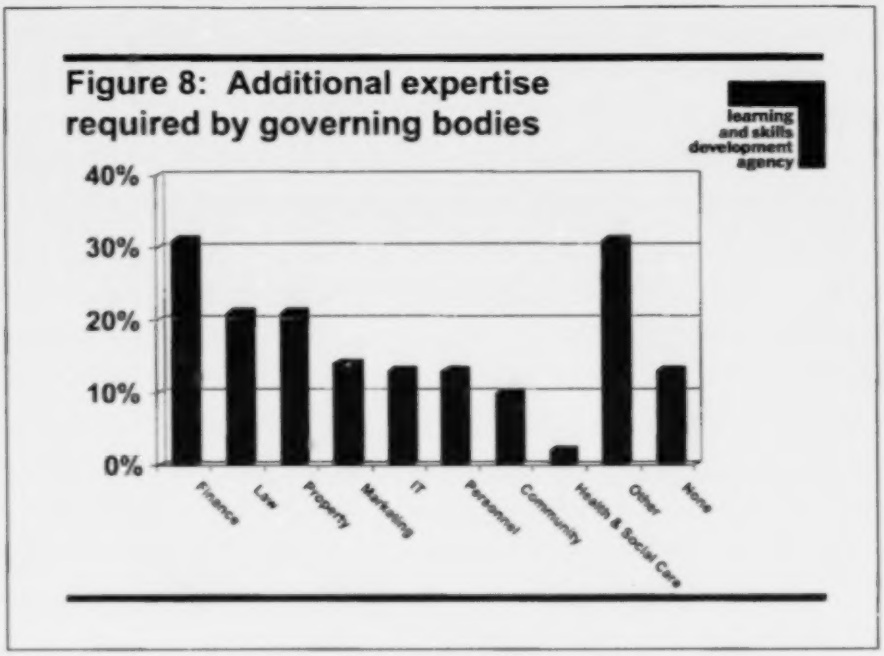


Since 31 July 1999, the main changes indicated were an increase in the numbers with expertise in *community needs, local authority planning* and *education* (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Changes in areas of expertise present within governing body since 31/7/99

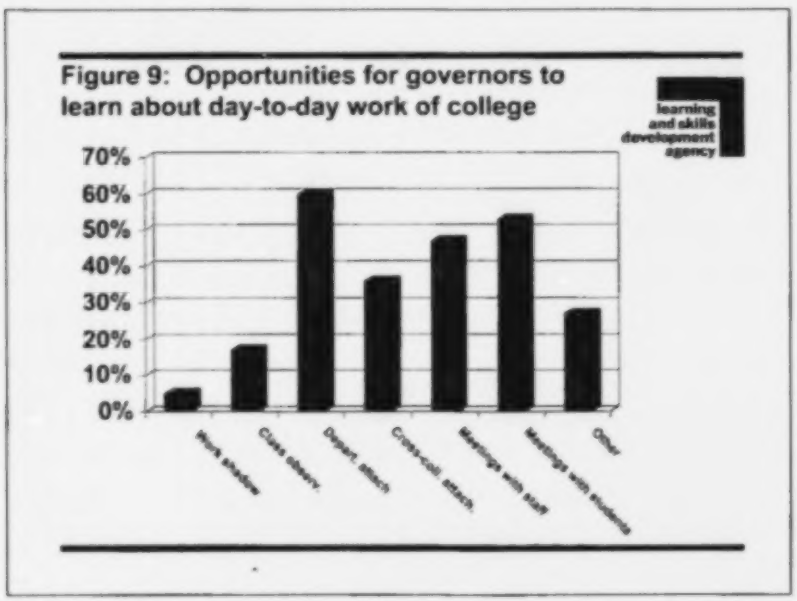


Despite the above, the most common areas in which it was indicated that governing bodies considered that they had a need to strengthen their expertise further were *finance* (31%), *law* (21%) and *property/estates* (21%) (Figure 8).



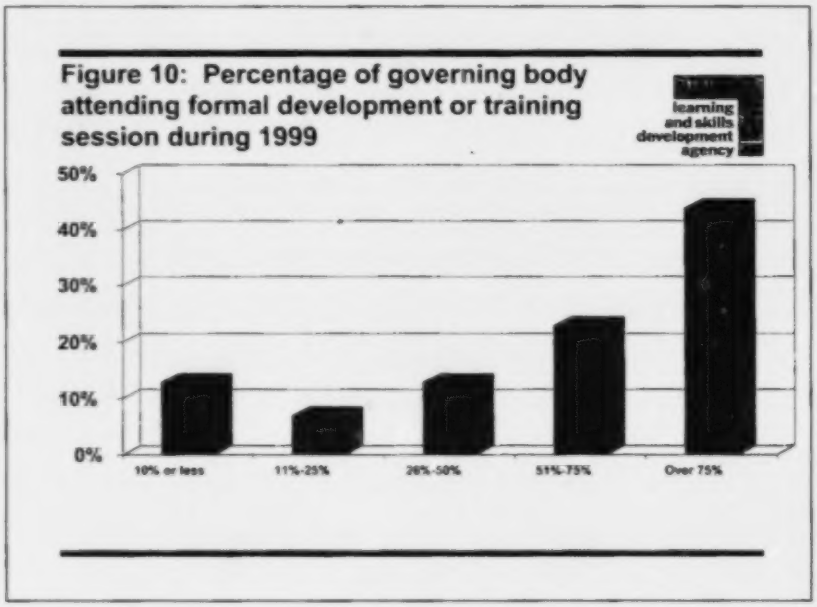
Opportunities for governors to learn about the day-to-day work of the college

The main opportunities that were reported were: attachment to a specific department/section (60%); meetings with students (53%); meetings with course teams (47%); and attachment to a manager with a cross-college role (36%). Only 17% recorded that governors had the opportunity to observe classes, and only 5% were able to work shadow staff (Figure 9).

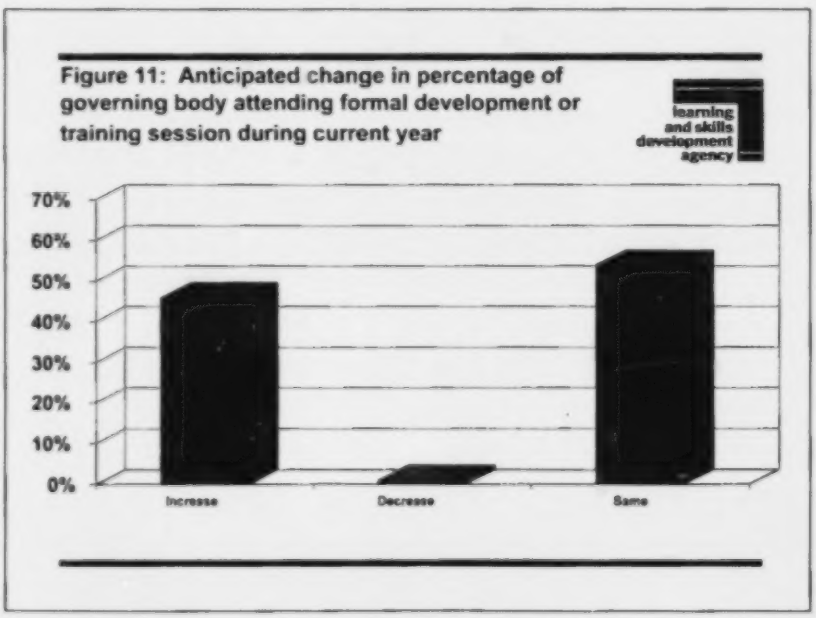


Percentage of governing body attending a formal development or training session during 1999

Almost half of the responding colleges (44%) reported that *over 75%* of their governors had attended a formal development or training session during 1999, with a further 24% indicating that between *51%* and *75%* had done so. Some 13% of respondents indicated that *10% or fewer* had attended one or more such sessions (Figure 10).



Just under half of the respondents (46%) anticipated an *increase in attendance* at formal development or training sessions during the current year, with almost all of the remainder envisaging no change (Figure 11).



Main future priorities for governor development

The most commonly recorded areas were training/updating (27%), curriculum planning (26%), benchmarking/target setting (25%), strategic planning (25%), quality/standards (23%), funding/finance (22%) and Learning and Skills Councils (20%). Among the least commonly mentioned areas were inspection (6%) and retention & achievement (3%), though it is possible that the latter aspects were in fact also subsumed within the benchmarking/target-setting area.

Most respondents planned to meet these priorities via some form of training, with 47% mentioning *training activities in general;* 23% identifying *training via outside agencies, including FEDA;* 19% citing *in-house training* and 12% *collaborative training with other colleges*. Around 11% reported the intention to undertake a *training needs analysis on behalf of governors*.

Examples of good practice

Almost three-quarters of respondents (71%) considered that their governing body could provide one or more examples of good practice. Taken together, almost every aspect of governance was mentioned. Most frequently flagged were efforts to ensure standards and probity, but other than that there was no obvious pattern in the responses. Respondents whose colleges had received a Grade 1 for governance in inspection referred to the evidence set out in the inspection report.

Other comments

Some 38% of respondents recorded other comments when asked if they wished to do so. Here again a wide range of issues was raised overall. There was, however, a clear predominance of pleas for a reduction in the burden of demands placed upon governors, and in the accompanying paperwork, plus a desire to see greater government recognition of the contributions that they made, including financial rewards.

3 Stage 2: survey of governors

3.1 Methodology

A questionnaire survey of all governors in a sample of 50 FE-sector colleges in England and Wales was undertaken during June and July 2000. The sample was chosen so as to include a spread of colleges that was broadly representative in terms of region and type of institution. Questionnaires were distributed via the clerks to the corporations concerned. An uncompleted copy of the questionnaire that was circulated can be found in **Appendix 3**. A full breakdown of the responses forms **Appendix 4**.

3.2 Profile of respondents

Response rate

A total of 323 completed questionnaires were returned. On the assumption that the average size of governing body involved in the survey, minus unfilled vacancies, was as for the responses for the Stage 1 survey, the 323 completed returns would represent a response rate of 37%.

Background of respondents

A majority of the completed returns came from *business* governors (54%). They would therefore appear to be over-represented in this survey, assuming that the Stage 1 survey – where business governors formed 37% of the total – provided a more accurate picture of the overall balance of FE-sector governing bodies. Also over-represented were governors from *other educational institutions* (8% compared with 1%), while under-represented categories were *coopted* governors (4% compared with 12%), those from *community organisations* (4% compared with 7%) and *student* governors (2% compared with 5%).

Just over a fifth of respondents were *female*, suggesting that women were also under-represented in this survey (22% compared with 30%), no doubt a consequence of the differences in the breakdown of employment background when compared with Stage 1, as outlined above.

At 5%, the balance of respondents from *ethnic minority* backgrounds was broadly in line with that found in Stage 1, though the *Asian* category was somewhat under-represented, and the *other* category over-represented.

Compared with the picture identified in Stage 1, the age profile was skewed rather more towards the *older age group*, a fact reflected in the relative over-representation of *retired* governors in this survey (31% compared with 17%).

Length of service

Just over half of the respondents had been governors for *more than 3 years* (52%), with the remainder split roughly evenly between the categories *2–3 years*,

1–2 years and *less than a year.*

Other experience of board or governing body membership

In each case, around a fifth of respondents had past or current experience of board or governing-body membership in a *school, another public sector organisation, a voluntary organisation* or as a *director of a commercial company.* Around 10% had board experience as a *manager of a commercial company.*

Areas of expertise

The main areas of expertise that respondents indicated they could contribute to the work of their governing bodies were *company management* (49%), *education* (41%), *personnel management* (39%) and *financial management* (38%). Among the categories listed in the questionnaire, the least commonly mentioned areas of expertise were *IT* (15%), *local authority planning* (13%) and *law* (12%).

Governing body committees

Around a third of respondents indicated that they were members of the *finance and employment policy* committee and, in each case, around a fifth said that they were members of the *audit, search, remuneration* or *standards* committees. Some 10% of responses were from *chairs* of full governing bodies, with a lesser but fairly even spread of representation of *chairs of other committees* listed in the questionnaire.

Responsibility for quality issues

When asked which committee or committees is/are responsible for quality issues, 35% of respondents indicated that they were dealt with by a committee which had the word 'quality' included in its title. The next most common responses were *standards committee* (19%) and *audit committee* (17%).

College working groups and ad hoc *committees*

There was a good spread of representation across all the types of working group and *ad hoc* committee as listed in the questionnaire. The most commonly mentioned were *self-assessment* (29%), *building and maintenance* (25%) and *personnel* (23%). Only 2% of respondents indicated that they served on working groups or *ad hoc* committees concerned with *learning support.*

3.3 Perception of governors' roles and responsibilities

Main reasons for becoming a college governor

The most common reasons indicated by respondents as to why they became college governors were: because I felt my expertise would be of use (76%); to do my bit to support further education (60%); and to help ensure that the college is responsive to the local community (39%). Despite the fact that the majority of respondents were from a business background, only 29% indicated that they had

become a governor to help ensure that the college is responsive to local employers.

Priorities and effectiveness of aspects of the corporation's business

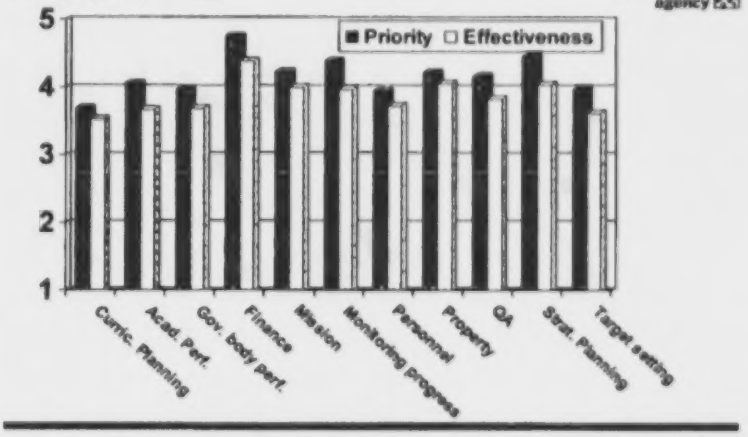
Respondents were asked to rate the level of *priority* that they felt their governing body attached to various aspects of the corporation's business, and how *effectively* they felt each was dealt with. Ratings were recorded using five-point scales, where 1 = *very low/very ineffectively*, and 5 = *very high/very effectively*.

Generally speaking, respondents considered that priority and effectiveness were closely related. Aspects that were accorded the highest priority also tended to be perceived as those that were dealt with most effectively – though in most cases, priority ratings were notably higher than the equivalent scores for effectiveness.

The most effectively handled aspects of the corporation's business were seen as *finance* (mean ratings: effectiveness 4.39; priority 4.77); *property* (4.06; 4.22); *strategic planning* (4.04; 4.46); *mission* (4.01; 4.23); and *monitoring college progress towards achieving targets* (3.98; 4.40). (However, the results from LSDA's *Governance health check questionnaire* (2001b) suggest that property is not always handled so effectively in practice.) The least effectively handled aspect was perceived to be *curriculum planning* (3.53; 3.70) – though even here, only 12% of respondents recorded effectiveness ratings below the mid-point on the scale (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Governors' perceived priority and effectiveness of aspects of Corporation's business

(figures show mean ratings where 1 = very low / very ineffectively & 5 = very high / very effectively)



When asked to what extent there should be changes in the levels of priority that their governing body attached to the different aspects of its business, responses suggested that in most cases, there were sizeable minorities who wished to see higher priorities allocated. The most commonly mentioned aspects, where this was the case, were: *curriculum planning* (37%); *evaluating academic performance* (35%); and *target setting (including use of benchmarks)* (35%).

Very few respondents considered that any area should be accorded lower priority than at present: the most commonly mentioned instances being *property* (7%) and *evaluating own performance* (6%). The aspects on which there was least desire for a change in priorities were *finance* (90%), *mission* (83%) and *property* (82%).

Changes in composition and operation of governing body and perceived impact on effectiveness

Overwhelmingly, the main change observed by respondents in the composition and operation of their governing bodies over the previous year has been in the *balance of the membership* (70%).

Respondents were also asked to what extent they felt that recent and planned changes in the composition and operation of their governing body have improved/will improve its effectiveness. Answers were recorded using a five-point scale where 1 = *not at all*, and 5 = *to a great extent*.

The balance of opinion about the changes was positive, with almost half the respondents (46%) recording ratings above the mid-point on the scale. Nevertheless, there was also a sizeable minority who considered that the changes would bring about little or no improvement, with almost a third (31%) allocating ratings below the mid-point.

Key issues and problems for the coming year

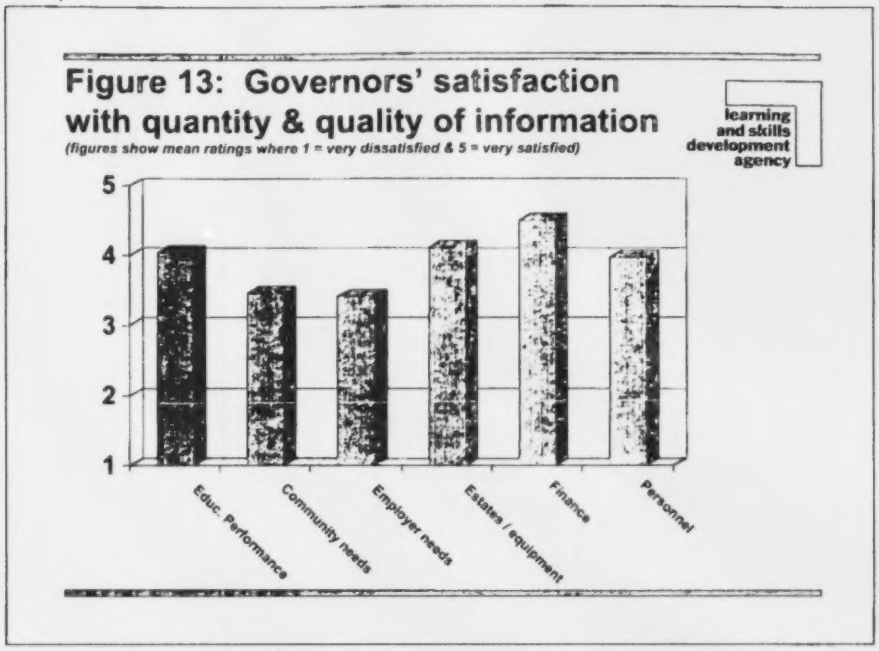
Fewer than 20% of respondents identified any key issue or problem for their governing body to tackle over the coming year. Among those who did respond to the question concerned, the most commonly flagged issues and problems related to *funding* (45%), *the impact of Learning and Skills Councils* (26%), and *infrastructure/accommodation* (24%).

3.4 Evaluation and self-assessment

Quantity and quality of information

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the quantity and quality of information that was provided to their governing body to enable it to perform effectively in a number of specified areas. Ratings were recorded using a five-point scale where 1 = *very dissatisfied*, and 5 = *very satisfied*.

Generally speaking, levels of satisfaction were high, and there was no area in which more than a small minority expressed dissatisfaction with the information that was provided. The greatest levels of satisfaction were expressed in relation to information in the areas of *finance* (mean rating 4.5), *estates and equipment* (4.11) and *educational performance* (4.03). The least positively rated areas for information were *community needs* (3.46) and *employer needs* (3.42) (Figure 13). (Here again, though, the results from LSDA's *Governance health check questionnaire* (2001b) present a more critical picture, with significant concerns about the quantity and quality of the information that is presented.)



Oversight and direction of college management and staff

Ratings were also sought for respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of their governing bodies in overseeing and directing the management and staff of their colleges. Answers were recorded using a five-point scale where 1 = *very ineffective*, and 5 = *very effective*.

Here again, levels of confidence seemed to be generally high, with almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) recording ratings above the mid-point on the scale, and only 8% below (mean rating 3.91) (Figure 14).

When asked to indicate any improvements that could be recommended, some 24% of the survey participants responded. A number of these challenged the view that the role of governing bodies was to 'oversee and direct' the management and staff of the college. Others indicated that they were well satisfied with the effectiveness with which these functions were discharged. Among the improvements that were suggested, no clearly dominant issue emerged. Those that were mentioned included: *wider involvement in decision-making by a larger number of governors; better communications between staff, management and governors; more probing at meetings;* and *more rigorous appraisal of senior post-holders.*

Use of own experience and expertise

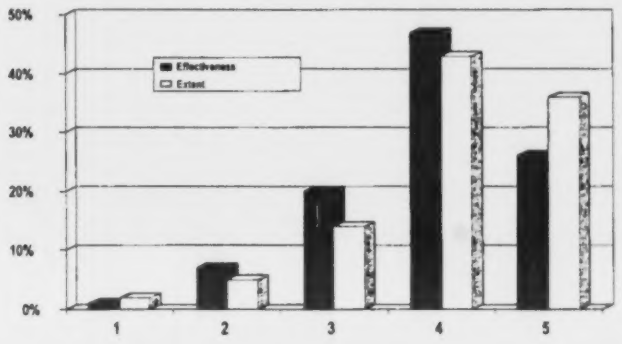
Respondents were then asked to rate the extent to which they felt that their governing bodies made effective use of their own experience and expertise, using a five-point scale where 1 = *not at all*, and 5 = *to a great extent*.

Once more, the majority reaction was very positive, with some 79% of respondents recording ratings above the mid-point on the scale, and only 7% below (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Governors' perceptions of effectiveness of governing body and use made of own expertise

learning and skills development agency

(figures show mean ratings where 1 = very ineffective / not at all & 5 = very effective / to a great extent)



Only 15% of survey participants responded to the invitation to recommend improvements in this area, some of these indicating general satisfaction or saying that it was too soon for them to make a judgement. Improvements that were suggested included: *greater use of the experience of community, staff and student governors; greater use of expertise in marketing; more informal contacts with fellow governors; reduction in influence of chair and principal;* and *more time to provide advice.*

Level of involvement of office holders

There appeared to be little desire for any changes in the levels of involvement of chairs, principals and clerks in setting the agenda and contributing to the meetings of governing bodies. In all cases, between 89% and 91% of respondents indicated that they felt the levels of involvement should *remain as at present.*

Self-assessment processes

The most commonly reported processes of self-assessment were via surveys of members (39%); annual reviews against targets (22%); discussions at meetings of full governing body (18%); and outside advisers/training days (18%).

When asked how the process of self-assessment might be improved, no clear pattern of recommendations emerged. One-third of respondents (33%) indicated that they did not consider that the current process could be improved, with a further 15% indicating that they were unsure and/or that it was too early to make

a judgement.

FEFC inspection and the quality of governance

Respondents were asked to rate the process of FEFC inspection (England only) for fairness and helpfulness in improving the quality of governance at their colleges in a number of specified areas. Answers were recorded using five-point scales where 1 = *very unfair/very unhelpful*, and 5 = *very fair/very helpful*. (It should be noted that the survey took place before the reform of inspection from April 2001, which arguably placed less emphasis on governance.)

Generally speaking, ratings were medium to positive, and relatively consistent across all the specified areas. Only small minorities recorded ratings below the mid-point on the scales. In each case, the FEFC inspection process was rated higher for effectiveness than for fairness. It should be noted that around half of the respondents felt unable to record an opinion on these issues.

When asked to suggest improvements in the process of inspection, some 24% of survey participants responded. A number of these queried the wording of the question with regard to the extent to which the 'fairness' and 'helpfulness' of the inspection process was relevant to improvements in the quality of governance. Others indicated that they regarded the process as generally *worthwhile, supportive* and *constructive*, or that it was too early for them to make a judgement. However, some respondents used words such as *overkill; disruptive; doubtful value for money;* and *fundamentally flawed*. Among the specific suggestions, there was some support for the retention of *self-assessment* as a basis for inspection, and antipathy to the future division of responsibilities between OFSTED and the ALI. Another recommendation was that inspection reports should distinguish between absolute performance and distance travelled.

3.5 Governor development

Areas of experience and expertise required by governing bodies

Respondents were asked in which areas of experience and expertise they considered that their governing bodies required strengthening. The most commonly identified areas were *marketing* (43%), *community needs* (36%), *employer training needs* (27%) and *IT* (26%). Those attracting the least support were *local authority planning* (11%), *company management* (11%), *financial management* (11%) and *property management* (9%). These priorities are in most cases notably at odds with those recorded in the responses to the equivalent question in the Stage 1 survey.

Need to develop own abilities

When asked about the aspects of governance where they felt the need to develop their own abilities, there was a high non-response rate (41%), while another 11% specifically indicated that there were *none*. Among the wide range of aspects identified by other respondents, *finance/funding* (28%) and *curriculum/educational issues* (21%) were by far the most common.

Opportunities to learn about the day-to-day work of the college

Of the opportunities that were listed, none was identified as being available by more than 36% of respondents. When compared with the pattern of responses to the equivalent question in the Stage 1 survey, this suggests that there may have been some ignorance of the opportunities that were actually on offer. Take-up rates by respondents appeared low, the most commonly engaged-in activity being *attachment to a specific department/section*, which had been taken up by only 11%. Of even more concern in most cases were the very low numbers who regarded the activities in which they had participated as worthwhile. Less than half of those who had engaged in *attachment to a manager with a cross-college role, attachment to a specific department/section, meetings with course teams* or *meetings with students* regarded these activities as worthwhile. The activities that were regarded most positively by those who had taken them up were *observation of classes* and *work shadowing of staff*, though both were less commonly available.

Formal development or training

A majority of respondents had attended *one or more formal governor development or training sessions* within the past 12 months (29% one session, 16% two sessions and 13% three sessions). Opinions of their helpfulness (using a five-point scale where 1 = *very unhelpful*, and 5 = *very helpful*) were generally very positive, with over three-quarters of those respondents who had participated rating them above the mid-point on the scale, and only 11% below.

Publications offering advice and guidance

From a list of specified publications, respondents were asked to identify which they saw, and how helpful they found them, using a five-point scale where 1 = *very unhelpful* and 5 = *very helpful*. (Note that this stage of the research was undertaken before the FEFC's training materials for governors had become available.)

The most commonly seen publications were *The college governor* pack (75%), *FEFC circulars* (75%) and *FEFC inspection reports* (74%). In general, all of the listed publications were regarded positively, with far more respondents recording ratings above the mid-point on the scale than below. Those rated most helpful were *FEFC inspection reports* (mean rating 3.86) and *The college governor* pack (3.84). The least positively rated were the *College Manager* magazine (3.41) and *FEFC circulars* (3.38).

Other support

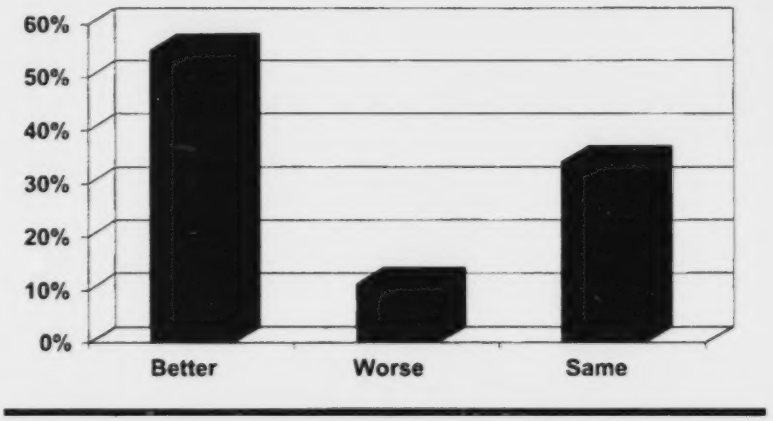
Only 37% of respondents identified other ways in which they and their fellow governors could be supported so as to be even more effective. Among these, the most commonly suggested were *training sessions* (17%), *reduction in responsibilities/red-tape/paperwork* (14%), and *sharing information between colleges* (13%).

3.6 Overall

Experience compared with expectations

A majority of respondents (55%) considered that their experience of acting as a college governor had been *better* than their expectations when they took up the appointment. Only 11% indicated that it had been *worse* (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Governors' experience compared with expectations



Further steps that could improve the quality and effectiveness of governance

There was no dominant pattern in the responses regarding further steps that might be taken to improve the effectiveness of governors. So far as the college and government/government agencies were concerned, *more/better training provision* was the most common recommendation; and in the case of other organisations, *more involvement of employers/chambers of commerce*.

Other comments

Around half of the respondents made one or more other remarks, but there was no common pattern to them. Of those who did comment, around 16% reported that being a governor had been an *enjoyable and challenging experience*, and a further 12% indicated that they regarded the *quality of governance* as they had experienced it as *good*. The most common of the remaining comments concerned the considerable *time pressures* on governors (19%).

Links with governors' opinion

Further analysis was undertaken to compare the differences in the profiles of governors who were most and least convinced of the effectiveness of college governance, using as a basis the responses to questions 14, 15 and 25.

In response to Question 14, the respondents who were most likely to have considered that their governing body was effective in overseeing and directing the management and staff of the college were those who:

- were very satisfied (rating 5) with the quantity and quality of the information their governing body received about personnel matters; and
- considered that their governing body gave a very high priority (rating 5) to strategic planning.

All of the respondents who shared these two characteristics rated their governing body above the mid-point on the scale (ratings 4 or 5) for effectiveness in overseeing and directing the management and staff of the college, compared with some 73% of the total number of respondents.

Conversely, respondents who were least likely to have regarded their governing body as being effective in these areas were those who:

- recorded medium to low satisfaction (ratings 3–1) with the quantity and quality of the information their governing body received about *personnel* matters; and
- considered that their governing body made less than effective use of their own experience and expertise (ratings 3–1).

Some 85% of respondents who shared these two characteristics rated their governing body at or below the mid-point on the scale (ratings 3–1) for effectiveness in overseeing and directing the management and staff of the college, compared with just 27% of the total number of respondents.

In the case of Question 15, respondents who were most likely to have considered that their governing body made effective use of their experience and expertise were those who:

- were very satisfied (rating 5) with the quantity and quality of the information their governing body received about *finance* matters; and
- considered that their governing body gave a very high priority (rating 5) to *mission.*

Over 93% of respondents who shared these two characteristics rated their governing body above the mid-point on the scale (ratings 4 or 5) for effectiveness in utilising their experience and expertise, compared with around 79% of the total.

Respondents least likely to have considered that their governing body was effective in making use of their experience and expertise were those who were less than satisfied (ratings 3–1) with the quantity and quality of the information their governing body received about *finance* matters. Over 32% of the respondents who shared this characteristic rated their governing body below the mid-point on the scale (ratings 2 or 1) for effectiveness in utilising their own experience and expertise, compared with just 6% of the total.

When asked how their experience of acting as a college governor compared with their expectations when they took up the appointment (Question 25), respondents most likely to have felt it to be better were those who:

- were very satisfied (rating 5) with the quantity and quality of the information their governing body received about *personnel* matters; and
- were satisfied (ratings 4 or 5) with the quantity and quality of the information their governing body received about *employer needs*.

Over 69% of respondents who shared these two characteristics regarded their experience of acting as a governor as better than their expectations, compared with some 53% of the total.

Respondents most likely to have considered their experience of acting as a governor to be worse than their expectations were those who recorded medium to low satisfaction (ratings 3–1) with the quantity and quality of the information their governing body received about *personnel* matters. Almost 26% of those who shared this characteristic regarded their experience of governorship to be worse than their expectations, compared with fewer than 12% of the total.

(The findings concerning personnel matters, reported above, are borne out by the results of the LSDA's *Governance health check questionnaire* (2001b).)

4 Stage 3: college visits

4.1 Methodology

A total of nine colleges participated in the final stage of the project, as follows:

A	General FE/tertiary college	Eastern Region
B	General FE/tertiary college	South-East Region
C	General FE/tertiary college	Wales
D	General FE/tertiary college	South-East Region
E	General FE/tertiary college	South-West Region
F	Sixth form college	South-West Region
G	Sixth form college	Greater London Region
H	General FE/tertiary college	Wales
I	General FE/tertiary college	North-West Region

A tenth college (agriculture and horticulture) also agreed to take part, but had to withdraw as a consequence of the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.

Three of the participating colleges were in the process of recovery from major problems that had been highlighted in critical inspection reports, which had in turn led to major restructuring of governance and management.

Members of the LSDA project team visited the colleges concerned during the period January–July 2001. As well as examining relevant documentation, structured interviews were undertaken with chairs of corporations, clerks, principals, and a range of governors drawn from different employment backgrounds. A standard checklist of questions was employed, covering eight main areas of governance, as follows:

- composition of governing body
- role of governing body
- operations
- determination of college policy
- monitoring and evaluation of college performance
- evaluation of own performance
- developmental needs
- overall.

Meetings of the corporations concerned were also observed.

4.2 Composition of governing bodies

Membership establishments of the governing bodies of the Stage 3 colleges ranged from 17 to 21, with the exception of one of the two sixth form college corporations, which had a membership of only 12. In fact, the majority of the chairs and principals who were interviewed tended to favour a smaller corporation as being more business-like, but recognised that the significant time demands arising from committee membership, plus the need to secure inputs

from different interest groups necessitated a membership of 15–20 or higher in most cases.

Across the colleges, there had been a general movement towards increased membership of community, local authority and student governors, in line with the revised Instruments and Articles. There were some regrets, however, at the requirement to reduce business representation where this had led to the loss of valued areas of expertise. There were several instances of efforts to achieve better female and ethnic minority representation. There was also a consciousness that corporations were under-represented in terms of SMEs, 'blue-collar' workers and the unemployed, but as yet, there had been little success in redressing this imbalance. One chair expressed concern at the difficulties involved in avoiding a growing membership from the ranks of the retired, in order to keep up-to-date with the fast-changing world of work. He acknowledged, though, that the demands of the post made it more feasible for those who were not in full-time employment, but who nonetheless might also have a body of invaluable experience.

At **College C**, seven new members had been appointed since September 2000. The total membership was now 20 – four female and 16 male. There were two local authority, three community, three coopted governors and a parent governor. A student governor, who originally started as an observer at meetings, had also been appointed.. The new recruitment had corrected some skills deficits that had been identified, in the areas of marketing and law. There was still a perceived need to strengthen expertise in IT. Efforts to improve the gender balance continued.

There were a number of governors who were bilingual in English and Welsh, but none who were unemployed, from ethnic minorities or disabled. However, the corporation was seeking to coopt a wider range of people onto committees in order to better reflect the profile of the community that the college served.

A skills audit had been conducted by the search committee, which had identified the remaining gaps that the corporation would seek to fill.

A number of problems were reported in recruiting new governors, especially in the case of community members, and there were also instances where it had proved difficult to obtain suitable local authority and student governors. Difficulties were especially acute in the case of multi-site/ethnically mixed colleges serving geographically diverse and multi-ethnic catchment areas, because of the challenge of securing adequate input from a wide range of different interest groups. College B had a long-standing policy of recruiting governors who were also parents of prospective, current or former students.

There was a wide variety in the areas of specific expertise still required by governing bodies, depending on their current make-up. There were, however, several examples of a growing concern to promote a holistic approach to the capability of the governing body as an entity sharing collective responsibility.

Significant evidence existed for rigorous recruitment and selection procedures for new governors via search committees – the introduction of these were commented upon favourably by the majority of interviewees. However, in a few cases, interviewees criticised what were said to be instances of 'networking' to

identify new business governors. Here it was felt that there could be a danger of an insidious 'club-like' atmosphere developing, which might breed complacency. It was therefore important that there was transparency in the associated procedures, so that recruitment and selection were seen to be fair and above board.

Several interviewees also expressed the view that the new Instruments and Articles were unhelpful on the process of selection in the case of nominated local authority, staff and student governors, where it was difficult to avoid the creation of tensions and ill-feeling as a result of attempts to vet for suitability prior to confirming appointments. (This concern was addressed to some extent in England with the further revision of Instruments and Articles that came into effect from April 2001.)

4.3 Role of governing bodies

The large majority of interviewees were conscious that the key role of the governing body was to set the strategic direction of the college. Pressing past priorities for most of the governing bodies concerned were reflected in more frequent references to financial stewardship and legal probity, than to determining the educational character and mission of the college, and to monitoring academic performance. Nonetheless, the comments made in past FEFC chief inspector's reports appeared to have been taken on board, in that there was general recognition of the need to give more attention in future to curriculum matters, and to student retention and achievement. All the colleges were still at various stages of transition in this change of emphasis, though there were several indications of improved systems of reporting via the appropriate committees.

At **College B**, the chair of the corporation defined the requirements for effective governance as:

- appreciating the strategic context
- understanding the business of the college
- ensuring that information is presented by senior managers in ways that facilitate understanding and allow it to be challenged – not rubber-stamping
- reporting by exception
- acquiring and maintaining a balanced membership
- keeping in touch with staff and 'walking the job'
- being probing and challenging
- having an interest in, and commitment to, the college.

The corporation at **College D** saw its main role as that of holding the principal and senior management team (SMT) to account. Governors 'added value' to management by testing proposals to check they were sound. The corporation constantly operated in the grey areas of guidance, direction, strategic vision, validation, testing and holding to account as a 'critical friend'. Particular efforts had been made to ensure that the governing body had a membership with high-level involvement [in their own particular fields] at local and national levels. Among other things, this allowed for external stimulus from industry, and an ability to interpret environmental changes. For example, useful advice on market analysis had been provided by a member of the governing body who was chair of the local County Enterprise organisation.

At **College I**, the role of the corporation was seen as:

- ensuring controls are in place
- monitoring their operation and college performance
- reviewing the external world and the impact it has upon the college – what kind of a college does the community require, and how does the college impact on the community?
- ensuring the principal is leading the college in the right direction
- assisting the principal and SMT to interpret and meet the targets set by the corporation.

Equally, there was evidence of a genuine understanding of the difference between governance and management, but accompanied by a recognition that the demarcation was not always easy to define. The most problematical area for making the distinction appeared to be in the areas of educational character and academic performance, which perhaps helped to explain some of the difficulties in shifting the relative emphasis away from the financial and personnel issues on which governing bodies felt more certain and confident of their own role and expertise.

At **College H**, there was a search and governance committee, whose title reflected the intention that it should consider and advise on the corporation's role and operations. The role of the human resources and remuneration strategy committee was about to be reviewed, as it was felt that, apart from the appointment of senior post-holders etc, most of the matters it dealt with were more properly the responsibility of management.

There was a general consensus that chairs, principals and clerks understood their different roles and operated effectively together in a professional way. The project team was able to observe several examples of such relationships. Clerks' workloads were considered to be onerous and growing. The balance between the administrative and advisory role of clerks appeared to some extent dependent on their perceived status. The precise definition of the clerk's duties was also a critical issue. Only one of the nine colleges involved in this stage of the project employed an outside professional clerking service. The majority of interviewees were resistant to the idea of professional clerking services provided by outsiders, although nationally, approximately 40% of corporations now avail themselves of such services, and the proportion is rising.

At **College A**, the role of the clerk was seen as ensuring that the board's work went ahead smoothly, seeing that it kept to the Instruments and Articles, handling communications between the board and the staff, and acting as technical adviser to the board. (Staff governor interviewees cited seeking advice on whether to take issues to the board, to the chief executive directly, or to lower levels of management.) The relationship of the chair to the clerk was seen as quite distinct from that of the chair to the chief executive: the clerk supported the board, was its technical adviser (and immediate adviser on legal issues), and provided a sounding board – especially over the way in which papers were presented. The clerk also worked with the chief executive to help the collation and presentation to the board of inputs from the SMT and departmental management.

At **College I**, the relationship between the clerk and the corporation was considered vital – 'stops us breaking the rules, advises us on procedures, business requirements and skill needs'. The clerk was the 'servant of the board' – worked for the board as a whole, not just for the chair and certainly not for the principal. At this college, the clerk was external (and was also clerk to three other corporations). Much of what was more usually undertaken by a clerk (including minute-taking) was allocated to a full-time administrative assistant to the corporation. Though the external nature of the clerk in this instance made it practically impossible for him to be an on-the-spot sounding board or a go-between, sufficient college contact time was built into his contract of employment so that he could keep up-to-date with the college's day-to-day life.

Generally speaking, interviewees were satisfied that governors were successful in contributing their own areas of experience and expertise in a personal capacity, and in acting collectively in the interests of the corporation. There were instances, however, of business governors expressing the criticism that some local authority, staff or student governors viewed their roles as representational rather than corporate, which served to undermine concepts of collective responsibility. One chair expressed the view that governors who had applied for the post were more committed to the role than those who had been nominated.

A business governor at **College E** gave the following examples of the way in which he was able to help ensure that the college kept in touch with the needs of employers and the local community:

- working closely with the technology department, and chairing the meetings of the engineering advisory committee which includes staff and local employers
- keeping in regular contact with local employers, acting as an ambassador for the college and also following up any negative comments or complaints
- playing an active part as a member of the Institute of Management, which had 400 members locally, and working with them to raise the profile of the college.

There was widespread support for the view that regular informal contact between governors, staff and students was highly desirable, if not always easy to achieve. In a minority of cases, there were structured attempts to brief governors on the day-to-day running of the college via attachments to sites or departments. Interviewees were adamant, though, that governor contacts with staff and students should in no way bypass or undermine the normal channels of communication with, and accountability to, the managers of the college.

At **College D**, the chair of the corporation held business lunches for staff and students. Governors regularly attended college functions. At the suggestion of students, there was to be a governors' stand at the next 'freshers' fair'.

The governing body at **College I** was conscious of the need for better links with staff and with students. This was not from a viewpoint of direct communication – there was no intent to bypass management – but because of a perceived need to understand better what happens to students and what it was like at the 'chalkface'. This was seen as a valuable help with their judgements and decisions. An initially unsuccessful scheme for linking governors to programme areas had now been re-launched with a more positive reaction.

There was little support for the introduction of any general system of financial remuneration of governors, over and above expenses. Nonetheless, several interviewees suggested that problems of governor recruitment and retention might be eased if it were possible to grant honoraria for committee chairs, and in cases where individual governors were currently effectively acting as unpaid consultants to their corporation's major development projects.

At **College A**, there was no support for general remuneration of governors, though childcare costs were paid in respect of a governor who was a single mother. In the case of 'imposed governors' for colleges in difficulty, it was felt that there might be a case for payment, as such governors were often effectively in the position of consultants, as well as often being required to travel long distances to attend meetings.

While there was some difference of opinion over the need for the changes in the composition of governing bodies, there was a general consensus among longer-serving interviewees that the quality of governance had improved significantly compared with pre-incorporation days. Governing bodies were now more questioning and constructively critical, and highly conscious of the need to avoid any suggestion of merely 'rubber-stamping' SMT decisions and recommendations. As a consequence, the role of governor was significantly more onerous.

The clerk to the corporation at **College C** considered that being a governor was now more time-consuming, and that responsibilities had increased, with regular revision of documents and policies. In the past, governors would generally accept what they were given; now they were much more questioning.

At **College G**, there had previously been an emphasis on organisational procedures and financial health in order to ensure the future of the college as an independent entity. This had been successful to the extent of achieving Category A financial status and approval of a capital building investment programme totalling £2.4m. The time was now right, therefore, to concentrate on the educational direction of the college and coincident with the appointment of a new principal, the corporation was now placing a greater focus on educational performance and the curriculum.

4.4 Operation of governing bodies

Most corporations reported an increase in the number of their committees, though in a minority of cases, there were feelings that this process had gone too far, and active consideration was being given to judicious rationalisation. Chairs, clerks and principals also noted a greater rigour in determining committee membership and in the form of their reporting to the corporation.

The governing body of **College C** had a number of key committees, as follows:

- human resources
- quality
- special
- audit
- curriculum and students
- remuneration
- finance and general purposes
- search
- capital schemes monitoring group.

Each governor, with the exception of the student governor, was a member of at least one committee. The governing body met four times a year; as did the remuneration and audit committees; the committees on quality (including the quality working group), human resources, curriculum & students, and finance & general purposes met three times a year. In addition, there was a special meeting for the induction of new members in September and a special corporation seminar on the institutional (strategic) plan.

The key committee at **College E** was the management committee, comprising 14 members (recently increased from 12) and responsible for 'helping ensure the college is well managed'. Its prime function was to monitor key aspects of the college provision, including quality, finance, personnel, premises, health & safety and equal opportunities. It met monthly (with the exception of August and September). Other committees included the audit committee (meeting once every term); search committee (meeting once a year in September); the remuneration committee (meeting once a year in the autumn); and the appeals committee. The full governing body met four times a year in November, March, June and July. Those expressing an interest in becoming a governor may be coopted as non-governors onto the audit committee, which provided those concerned with useful experience should a vacancy arise.

The governing body at **College F** had the following committees:

- academic planning and quality
- appeals
- audit
- business development
- finance and general purposes
- personnel and search (two separate committees with the same membership, but meeting on the same day)
- remuneration
- foundation.

Greater rigour had been applied to membership of committees at **College D**. Committee chairs were automatically members of the remuneration and finance & operations committees. The audit committee was chaired by the vice-chair of the corporation. There was no standards committee, as the corporation preferred to interpret changes to their own model and see how the requirements could be fitted in without undermining the board's approach. Any member of the corporation was allowed to attend any committee (subject to a 'courtesy' check with the chair concerned). New governors were not appointed formally to any committees within the first six months of their appointment, but sat on a number as observers before indicating their preference.

Over the post-incorporation period at **College A**, the trend had been to create more committees, including a standards committee, and a governance committee (the latter to evaluate the performance of the corporation).

There was evidence of efficient handling of detailed business by committees, so that the meetings of the full governing body dealt largely with committee reports. As indicated in **section 4.5** below, though, this process also brought with it the dangers of striking the wrong balance in governing-body meetings, so that time was wasted repeating the committees' discussions or, conversely, merely nodding through their recommendations.

At **College F**, governors were issued with a calendar of meetings of the corporation and committees, running from August through to July. The calendar also set out what it was the committee was expected to do at that meeting: for example, the 14 May 2001 meeting of the corporation would include committee reports; discussion of the self-assessment report, the operating plan and changes to the strategic plan; and the governance calendar for 2001/02. The 4 June meeting of the audit committee would include progress with the audit plan and discussion of audit planned for the following years. The finance and general purposes committee of 28 June 2001 would include college management accounts; discussion of the draft budget for the following academic year and draft 3-year financial forecast; discussion of fee policy; the student continuation information and review of key policies. The governance calendar provided a well-presented and clear explanation for governors of when key decisions needed to be taken.

The nature of the new committee structures had placed more demands on most governors, and had contributed towards resignations in some instances. Inevitably, such demands were exacerbated where there were deficiencies in time management, and where the demarcation between the business of the full governing body and its committees was less than clear.

Governors' specific responsibilities at **College A** were the product of thought and discussion between the clerk, chair and chief executive; individuals were then approached. The policy was to spread the load (around two committees per governor) taking account of preferences, expertise and developmental needs. Established governors were sometimes transferred to a different committee if that was required to accommodate a newcomer's profile most appropriately.

Currently the corporation at **College H** had six committees: audit; finance; estates strategy; education and business strategy; human resources and remuneration strategy; and search & governance. A total of 45 corporation and committee meetings had been held in the past year. The finance committee met monthly. In recent years, there had been a heavy workload for chair, clerk and individual governors, and a number of resignations may have been influenced by these demands. They also effectively restricted the opportunities when governors were available for training. The clerk had averaged 3–4 hours overtime per day. There were plans to rationalise the committee structure by merging the finance and estates strategy committees, and by reducing the membership of all. A skills audit, annually reviewed, was used to inform the allocation of governors to committees.

Interviewees revealed widespread satisfaction with the way that agendas were assembled, and there were no criticisms of the triumvirate of chair, principal and clerk unreasonably restricting their scope, or otherwise exercising inappropriate control over their contents. There was little evidence of any proactive 'trawling' for items from individual governors who were not chairs of committees: nevertheless, several examples were observed of chairs of corporations asking for items to appear in future agendas as a result of critical questioning during meetings (see **section 4.5** below). Several of the staff governors who were interviewed voiced criticism at the restrictions placed upon them in terms of their exclusion from the membership of certain committees, and their attendance for particular agenda items. Some boards were considered to be oversensitive in this respect in their interpretation of the Instruments and Articles. (In England, the revised Instruments and Articles from April 2002 tackled most of these concerns.)

At **College A**, agenda setting started with the clerk, who consulted the chair and the chief executive. Individual governors who wanted to add an item contacted the clerk, who then discussed the proposal with the chair and the chief executive. Requests to add items to the agenda were rarely rejected, but were often absorbed within another connected item.

At **College D**, the chair set the agenda. A written report on matters arising was provided so as to streamline this part of the agenda. The clerk had a major responsibility for guidance on compliance issues. There was a standing agenda, so discussion focused mainly on where to fit items in. Issues tended to arise via committees, and were therefore raised under the reports of the committee chairs. Items could also be raised via the clerk, though most would normally be absorbed within an item on the standing agenda, rather than needing to be dealt with under 'any other business'.

Agenda items at **College I** were set around an annual calendar of business; beyond that, they derived from board decisions (one example being the decision at a meeting of the corporation to remit an item to the quality standards and achievements committee for it to re-submit to the board). Protocol governed the production of the board's agenda, and involved the SMT, chair and clerk; this allowed management to add items that the board should know about. Papers were drafted and sent out at least seven clear days ahead, having first been accepted (or edited) by the chair, the principal and the clerk. The clerk insisted on keeping to the protocol and not accepting late agenda items.

4.5 Conduct of governing-body meetings

In general, the corporation meetings observed by members of the project team were well conducted. There was some variation in the quality of documentation supporting agenda items, and in the balance of contributions from individual governors. In most of the meetings that were observed, a minority of governors spoke rarely or not at all; in a few, contributions were almost entirely confined to those from the chairs of committees.

Meetings appeared most effective when the background documentation for agenda items was accompanied by concise covering papers that directed governors' attention to the points at issue and the decisions that were required. Chairs made a major contribution to the effectiveness of meetings by proactively seeking contributions, and not allowing a minority of the more experienced or articulate governors to dominate proceedings at the expense of others who might have a valuable input to make. Though the contributions of individual governors within meetings tended to be confined to critical questioning, instances were also observed of them introducing new ideas to positive effect.

A governing-body meeting at **College B** was divided into two sections: the first (lasting 2 hours 20 minutes) comprised items for action/consideration; the second (25 minutes' duration) items for note/information. The college SMT was in attendance throughout – in addition to the principal, comprising the director of planning and resources, the director of curriculum and quality, and the director of student services and marketing. Members considered the principal's report and also reports from the search, employment & personnel, audit, and finance & standards committees. In each case, members' attention was drawn to a series of recommendations that required approval. The key agenda item was a discussion paper submitted by the principal on the strategic implications of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), the acceptance of which would require a subsequent restructuring of the college. It had been written in conjunction with a number of governors, and had undergone several adjustments before circulation. The principal invited members to test and challenge the assumptions upon which the paper was based (eg was the strategic analysis correct? were there any omissions?). The atmosphere was one of mutual exploration. The principal was able to present a position which he acknowledged was founded on a number of critical uncertainties, thus giving the green light to a searching examination. Throughout the meeting, the chair encouraged an open but challenging atmosphere that enabled areas of contention and dispute to be thoroughly explored, rather than glossed over.

At a meeting of the governing body of **College F**, reports from committees and from the principal were set out in well-presented papers. The reports and recommendations from committees summarised in written form the matters considered by committees and then as a standard paragraph identified 'items requiring the formal approval of the Corporation'.

At a board meeting of **College I**, members indicated that they felt a report on a survey of the college's students to be of particular importance – the survey concerned learners and their views, was a central feature of the college, and therefore must be considered in detail, and learnt from. As it was felt that the SMT had not yet undertaken sufficient analysis of the findings to draw out issues properly for the board, it was returned to the quality, standards and achievements committee for deeper analysis and re-submission.

As noted already, some examples were observed of corporations wasting time by repeating business already handled in committee. More rarely, there were

instances where important recommendations from committees were accepted without sufficient checking that their basis was fully understood and supported by the other governors. High-quality covering papers, and proactive chairing were both crucial ingredients in ensuring that these deficiencies were avoided.

At **College C**, the papers for a meeting of the corporation were well set out with clear indications to governors of decisions they were required to take. The support provided by the clerk was clearly of a high standard. The meeting itself was efficiently organised and well chaired. The key decisions for the meeting concerned the receipt of a report on the recent college inspection, with governors seeking to receive an action plan in the future and a preliminary consideration of the institutional plan. Much of the detailed work was being carried out by the committees of the corporation. Student achievement was addressed in discussion of the feedback from the inspection report.

4.6 Determination of college policy

There was evidence that individual governors were having an increasingly active involvement in drawing up college strategic plans, via such mechanisms as annual 'away days'/weekends.

At **College C**, a special evening session was set aside to focus on revisions to the draft institutional plan. The revised plan was then submitted to the full governing body for approval. A business governor noted that key issues could be discussed in depth at annual 'away days'. He noted that the board had now shifted its emphasis from finance to concentrate on curriculum and quality issues.

Apart from the complaints from some business governors, noted in **section 4.3**, about some local authority, staff or student governors viewing their roles in a representational capacity, there was general satisfaction that the different interests present within governing bodies were articulated harmoniously within a context of collective corporate responsibility.

At **College A**, different nominee and interest groups within the governing body were viewed as bringing balance and an enhanced breadth of vision to decision-making, rather than influencing the corporation to favour any specific group. It was emphasised that the first responsibility of the corporation as a whole, and of individual members, was to look after the best interests of the college, and not to protect any 'constituency' need.

There was considerable apprehension among interviewees about the perceived increase in the central and regional planning function of the LSCs/ELWa, as compared with the FEFCs, and the consequent implications for colleges. It is likely that such concerns were magnified by the degree of uncertainty concerning future requirements that was inevitable at the time the visits took place, and that they may have been allayed to some extent, at least, as the developing policies of LSC/ELWa have become clearer.

College D was already taking account of the potential implications of the LSC's wider remit for planning provision, compared with the former FEFC. Restructuring was in hand, to take account of the CoVE initiative etc. The stronger focus on teaching quality in the new inspection framework was also seen as extremely significant. Inspector training by some staff and an external validation role at another recently inspected college had raised awareness across the college. The restructuring was designed specifically to bring college managers into line with their opposite numbers in the LSC. It was felt likely that the LSC would drive collaboration at a faster pace, would engage more, and be less 'hands off'. Competition would force the college to focus more directly on core business, and would drive out some provision.

4.7 Monitoring and evaluation of college performance

All the governing bodies concerned in this stage of the project were receiving regular information about student retention and achievement, and were actively involved in agreeing targets, and monitoring progress against them.

At **College C**, the student and curriculum committee received targets for retention, attainment and outcomes. These targets were monitored by this committee, which reported to the full governing-body meeting on any area where targets were not being reached. The institutional plan was drawn up in October and included an annual operating statement and enrolment targets. Figures were presented to each meeting of the governing body. If targets fell short, a report was made to the finance committee, then to the corporation. An action plan was then drawn up for the SMT and the finance committee. The salary of the SMT was dependent on the college meeting targets set out in the institutional plan. There was now an annual appraisal by two committee chair members of the corporation, who would agree on targets. The principal was appraised by two other governors annually.

Every governing-body meeting at **College D** received a report, detailing progress against financial and non-financial indicators. The key work concerning target setting took place in the committees, though the corporation would raise issues if it did not feel that a committee had justified their recommendations. Governors were conscious of the need to identify non-stretching targets that managers might be tempted to propose.

At **College E**, information was produced in a standard format containing three years' retention and achievement data. This was benchmarked, and areas of weakness were identified. In addition, 14 section heads made regular presentations to governors about their work, including action being taken as a result of previously identified areas of concern. Every meeting of the management committee had a standing item on monitoring and strategic priorities. Governors were issued with a calendar, making it clear at what point they should receive information.

Given its large size and multi-site nature, much of the detailed business at **College H** was dealt with by the corporation's committees, with only the key decisions being referred to the corporation. The reporting of financial and HR data was now considered to be of high quality. Agreement was now being reached on the format and timing of the reporting of academic performance data, including retention and achievement, assisted by recent improvements in the college's MIS. The education and business strategy committee was now benchmarking performance against other Welsh comparator colleges.

However, this was an area in which many interviewees felt that there was still need for significant development. Knowing what were realistic targets to set,

effectively monitoring against them, and flagging appropriate remedial action were all issues for debate. Continued efforts were being made to improve the effectiveness of benchmarking against comparator institutions, but there was still some uncertainty about the validity of the processes involved in determining what were achievable targets.

The governing body at **College B** received a significant amount of information through the committee system and through monthly reports. These were used to set measurable objectives. Dissatisfaction with progress against target resulted in requests for explanation and action – a recent instance being with respect to student retention on part-time courses. A framework existed that allowed 'drilling-down' to individual course level. National benchmarks were consulted.

The governing body at **College D** disapproved of a 'league table' approach to benchmarking, wishing rather to capture the student experience 'in the round'. Parameters of acceptability were set, rather than specific targets, indicating a required relationship to national benchmarks. A cross-college governance working group was seeking to develop further key performance indicators – especially non-financial PIs. The corporation was firmly opposed to restricting enrolment in order to improve performance indicators.

Likewise, though raising and maintaining student achievement was widely recognised as a crucial issue for colleges, there was less certainty about the associated practical requirements and the role of the governing body in ensuring that this took place.

Nevertheless, where governing bodies were presented with meaningful data on retention and achievement, and on student feedback, there was evidence of them being prepared to act critically and effectively.

The corporation at **College A** received information on enrolments in comparison to targets. Governors requested an explanation and follow-up action where something was clearly adrift in the case of a course that hitherto had been recruiting well. Prior to their approval, the standards committee had declined to accept targets proposed by the SMT, and had sent them back for amendment and re-submission. Governors were pleased that they were now receiving better information about the relative costs of different groupings of courses, and felt it would aid critical decisions related to the sustainability of the curriculum offer.

A business governor at **College C** noted that 'governors are no longer a rubber stamp – we have sent back items to be changed; for example, policies which have been promoted via committees without thorough justification'.

At **College D,** efforts had been made to offer graphical presentation of data that was readily understandable to governors. On the basis of data requested by the governing body from the SMT, in relation to proposed restructuring, targets had been raised as part of a newly introduced Project Excellence initiative.

4.8 Monitoring and evaluation of governing-body performance

Self-assessment systems were in place in all the colleges that were visited, often linked to an annual 'away day' review session. Most interviewees regarded the

process as rigorous and valuable. There was less evidence, in most cases, of meaningful benchmarking against other comparable corporations. Here, however, the main stumbling block seemed to be the lack of relevant data and guidance as to how this could be done effectively, rather than any lack of motivation.

Self-assessment at **College B** took place annually via the committees, and by the completion of a questionnaire by individual members, which graded performance and was informed by staff and student perceptions. The data was then collated and summarised by the clerk, moderated by the search committee and an action/development plan agreed.

At **College C**, targets were set for governors' attendance at meetings, the training needs analysis, attendance at training events, and input into the institutional plan. An annual evaluation was undertaken, in which individual governors completed a self-assessment questionnaire, which employed a 1–5 scale of grading. The results were processed by the quality committee. Any area that received an average grading below 2 was highlighted for improvement. An annual seminar of the governing body discussed the overall evaluation and agreed follow-up action. Benchmarking took place in conjunction with a recent survey of inspection grades for governance at all colleges in England. In addition, use was made of the networks for clerks and for chairs, which meet once a term. The audit committee also had a checklist of activities, which needed to be carried out, and supporting evidence that might be provided.

At **College D,** there was a relatively informal approach to evaluation of performance, though a self-assessment questionnaire was employed. Evaluation was a major item on the agenda of the corporation's annual 'away day'. At meetings of the corporation and its committees, members were under continual encouragement to identify how their governance was adding value to the college. The search committee had the major role in evaluation, and had implemented the LSDA's *Governance health check questionnaire* (2001b). Though no formal benchmarking took place in this area because of the lack of robust data from comparator colleges, regular contact was maintained with governing bodies at other colleges, and through attendance at regular meetings of a county consortium.

The chair of the search and governance committee at **College H** had been involved in the development of a national self-assessment model in England, and had since worked with the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) in Wales to develop a checklist. Using these tools, the corporation and its committees had recently completed a thorough self-assessment, and a resulting action plan was now being drawn up. Though some governors had found the process very demanding, it was generally agreed that it had done a considerable amount to raise consciousness about their role, and to make them more self-critical. The clerks' network was used to exchange ideas on best practice.

In English corporations, there were mixed feelings about the impact of the Common Inspection Framework. The increase in the attention to teaching and learning was welcomed. The subsuming of governance issues in a single cross-college grade was felt likely to lead to an inevitable downgrading of the importance that had been accorded to self-assessment in this area in recent years. However, the consequential reduction in the associated paperwork was viewed as beneficial.

4.9 Development needs

Training and development needs were taken seriously, being typically identified by annual surveys of all governors.

There were some complaints from recently appointed interviewees that induction programmes for new governors were inadequate in terms of content, and insufficiently tailored to the needs of the individual. Otherwise, there was general acknowledgement that development and training opportunities had improved over time. However, given other commitments, time pressures inevitably restricted such sessions to levels below what would be ideal, despite the use of such strategies as adding short briefings to governing-body meetings.

Governors at **College B** were supplied with a *College Handbook* which contained useful information about their roles and responsibilities, the college and various policies approved by the board. They were also issued with a training and development support programme for the academic year, comprising 15 events, each generally lasting 90 minutes. Both the principal and the director of curriculum and quality were recognised governor trainers. Induction was considered to be very important. The programme adopted had proved extremely beneficial, as new governors needed to be aware of so much before they could make a significant contribution to the corporation. A governors' working group had been established to consider developmental needs, and the self-assessment process also served to highlight individual and group training needs. Training was now at the forefront – it had a high priority and was seen as contributing to the ongoing improvement in effectiveness of both individuals and the board.

Governors at **College D** were undertaking training with KPMG, using the governor support materials, with the emphasis on their role in curriculum and strategy. Induction was handled via a county-wide scheme in collaboration with other colleges. This facilitated networking and openness to new thinking. It was considered that this process was often more successful in fostering development than more formal training approaches. The need to strengthen induction was recognised, however.

Newly appointed governors at **College F** received a welcoming letter from the clerk to the corporation, plus a pack of information which included the Instruments and Articles of Government applying to sixth form colleges; the ethical code of practice; a briefing pack for new governors; copies of the minutes of recent meetings of the committee that the new member would be joining; the college's current strategic plan, operational plan for the current year, prospectus, charter and most recent inspection report. In addition, governors were offered a range of briefings, plus meetings with key staff.

At **College H,** there was now a three-stage induction process for new governors. Regular 30-minute developmental sessions for all governors were held immediately prior to meetings of the corporation (for example, concerning 'whistle-blowing' and the provisions of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*). Separate two-hour sessions were also arranged for governors according to individual requirements. 'Away day' corporate planning sessions, held twice a year, were viewed as having a considerable indirect developmental function. A detailed governor-training schedule had been drawn up, covering the next two years. The chair expressed doubts, though, about the overall efficacy of training that was largely arranged and delivered in-house. He felt that a nationally organised programme of half- or one-day sessions would be preferable (a view echoed by a staff governor), allowing the development of a high-quality standard programme from which governors across Wales could pick and mix according to their individual requirements.

In terms of priority areas for future development, there was a general desire for more support on curriculum and strategy issues, and also some demand for more help with risk assessment.

At **College C**, governor development was viewed as a continuous process that needed to respond to external changes and trends. The main recent change in respect of development had been the increased focus on the curriculum and the academic performance of the college. A survey of developmental priorities had been carried out. One weekend every two years was specifically set aside for governor development, and evening seminars were held as required. Training was seen as needing to become more sophisticated, as the role of governor had become ever more demanding.

In some cases, action plans drawn up under the requirements of the Standards Fund had produced significant developmental spin-offs for the governing bodies concerned.

College A had taken advantage of the Standards Fund and of support from the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER). The focus was now firmly on the need to understand the range of choices regarding the educational mission and curriculum of the college. A governor development day with the SMT was planned for the near future. There was now felt to be an adequate supply of support documents and materials aimed at governors, and every member of the corporation was referred to these, as a supplement to the programme of development days. The corporation did not favour a structured 'whole board' programme – individual members were at different stages and therefore needed different types and levels of support.

In line with the views about the need for a more holistic approach to governance, noted in **section 4.2** above, some interviewees argued persuasively that consultancy and training needs analyses (TNA) for whole corporations would be a more productive way forward than training for individual governors, however well tailored.

The belief at **College G** was that the requirement was less about specific training for individuals, but more for overall consultancy support to help the board to identify the key priorities, and address how it might best tackle them. The main perceived weakness lay in governors' levels of expertise in curriculum and academic performance issues. The emphasis was now on working with college management to raise practical awareness, in order to foster trust, open relationships and a college-wide focus.

At **College I**, the general feeling was that – induction apart – development tailored to the needs of the whole corporation would be more fruitful than relying on set training packages aimed at individual members. The complexity of an FE college was quite a challenge for newcomers to the board to understand and, unlike universities or schools, FE colleges had more limited time with their students. There was still considered to be a need for the board to 'get its corporate head' around curriculum, student and quality issues.

4.10 Overall impressions

In addition to their employment experience and individual expertise, most interviewees had some background of commitment to the local economy, the local community, or social service in general.

The large majority felt fulfilled in their role as a college governor, and believed that they were 'making a difference' in terms of adding value. The main areas of complaint concerned the demands made by the workload and consequent involvement of time, and what were perceived as the increasingly onerous responsibilities of the post.

There was also widespread agreement, though, that governing bodies performed an effective role, and increasingly so. Interviewees were virtually unanimous that corporations had moved from 'rubber-stamping' to a questioning and challenging role that was more rigorous and proper.

The chair of the corporation at **College C** had served as a governor since 1988. Her greatest reward in the role was to have seen the college moving ahead, expanding into a new site, coping successfully with change, and becoming a more important part of the community it served. The downside was the onerous legal obligations and weight of other responsibilities. She saw the test of effective governance as ensuring that the corporation fulfilled its remit within the community, and secured a high-quality educational experience for all the college's students. She felt that the corporation was succeeding because it received good-quality information from management, had effective committees and members who were focused on asking the right questions, bolstered by a regular assessment of performance and end-of-year evaluation.

A community governor at the same college had previous experience of working with colleges in the county to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties or disabilities. He was therefore used to working in partnership with Social Services and the voluntary sector. He had become a governor after responding to an advertisement, wishing to 'give something back'. He had two children at the college, and had been impressed by the support that had been provided to them. He saw himself as being able to contribute a sense of objectivity, testing the strategic plan to ensure that it was working in reality; and helping to produce a sound economy, so that young people and adults could stay on in the area, rather than having to leave to find work elsewhere.

The chair of the human resources committee, a business governor, had some 12 years' experience of governorship. He reflected that 'in the early days, we had no teeth and were dominated by the Local Authority. Our contribution has noticeably improved'. Successfully seeing through the merger that formed the present college had been very satisfying. The membership comprised one of the best governing bodies on which he had served. There had been a dramatic change from 'rubber-stamping' towards challenging and questioning.

A business governor at **College E** from the engineering industry came from a family with a long-standing active involvement in education. He had been approached by the college and invited to become a governor. After he returned as a governor after a five-year gap, he had noted a significant improvement in the overall performance of the board. Meetings were now conducted more efficiently and effectively.

Governors at **College G** reported their interest in the role as being connected to feelings of 'putting something back', and a notion of community service. Parent, student and staff governors were all conscious of a direct responsibility to those attending and working at the college. Pride was taken in the successful outcome of the college's Round 2 inspection, and the agreement to a new building programme, based on a belief that governors had made significant contributions.

Staff governors at **College C** and **College H** considered that the Instruments and Articles should be reviewed in order to remove some of the current restrictions on the roles open to staff governors.

Two governors at **College I** commented:

'With their cut-and-thrust and display of keen minds at work, our corporation meetings are satisfying in themselves; it is a privilege to be part of this board.'

'There is no point being on the board if there is nothing to do but rubber-stamp; the status of being a governor is insufficient unless there is something tangible to achieve. Doing something for our community's college is important to you as a member of that community, but the real importance comes from what you achieve. Our work and that of the college touches the lives of a lot of people in the community, and the college is a major employer in its own right.'

5 Conclusions and implications

5.1 A moving picture

This research project covered a two-year period in which significant changes affected the composition, operations and priorities of governing bodies. Its primary objectives were to examine the responses to the changed requirements for governing bodies introduced from 1 August 1999. During the project, the replacement of the English and Welsh FEFCs by the LSC and ELWa introduced a major reform of the planning and funding arrangements for colleges, bringing in its wake further potentially substantial implications for their governance and management. Other noteworthy governmental initiatives such as Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) in England, and Networks of Excellence in Wales, were only just beginning to have an impact on strategic thinking. At the time of our surveys, corporations were in the process of transition in their responses to the changed requirements placed upon them. The new planning and funding regime was still in its early stages of development, and the ways in which colleges would be affected remained unclear in many respects. We should note, therefore, that our findings represent the report of a journey that was still under way, and on which the desired destinations were as yet sometimes unclear.

With few exceptions, though, the data emerging from the research project presents a picture common to all the main categories of college.

5.2 Membership

Background

Changes in the composition of governing bodies have been gradual, and generally in line with expectation. The most obvious indications were seen in the reduction in the percentage of business governors, and the increase in local authority and community governor membership. These adjustments were still being completed, as the terms of office of individual governors came to an end and they were replaced, though some corporations reported difficulties in attracting applicants who fitted the desired profile for community governor roles. The fact that there were no instances within the returns to our survey of governing body chairs from a community background is also worthy of comment, given the renewed emphasis on ensuring that colleges are fully responsive to the needs of their catchment areas.

Gender, ethnicity and age

There had been a slight increase in the percentage of female governors, and of those from ethnic minority backgrounds, albeit affecting a minority of colleges in the period since August 1999. This trend looks set to continue as other corporations indicated that adjustments to the gender and ethnicity balance of their membership were among future recruitment priorities. Likewise, there had also been a slight downward adjustment in the typical age profile. Again, this trend appears likely to continue. However, the age of a clear majority of

governors remained at over 50, and there was little evidence that the proportion of retired governors had decreased to any noticeable extent, or would do so in the future, despite the stated intention of some corporations to make such an adjustment. This may well reflect the difficulty of finding the right balance between experience, expertise and 'representation areas' from the ranks of those employed full-time, given the onerous nature of the role.

Search committees

Although changes in the composition of governing-body membership had been gradual and slight, and this seemed set to continue, there were clear indications that corporations were sensitive to the current government's concerns that colleges should focus on serving the needs of their local communities. Search committees usually appeared to have a clear vision of the desired profile of membership towards which they were working, driven by an underlying concern that it did not omit significant areas of relevant experience and expertise. An indication of this commitment was seen in the frequently expressed concerns about the lack of direct input to governing bodies of unskilled or semi-skilled workers, or the unemployed – especially given the priority both to widen participation in education and training, and to raise levels of achievement. It is not surprising that such a gap in the experience of the membership of governing bodies existed and seemed unlikely to be easily remedied in the future. A question remains, though, as to the extent to which the absence of direct involvement in governing bodies by members of these groups inhibits the ability of corporations to respond fully to the needs of those groups, or whether other mechanisms of consultation and feedback provide adequate substitutes.

Parent governors

A further question to emerge from the research concerns the role of parent governor. Outside many sixth form colleges, this category was not usually present within the formal establishment of the membership of the corporation. Nonetheless, there were many other instances where members belonging to another formal category were also parents of current or past students of the colleges concerned. Sometimes this characteristic was consciously identified as additionally advantageous by search committees; on other occasions, a parental background had provided a motivation for individuals to apply to become a governor. Given the emphasis in the Common Inspection Framework on the experience of the learner, it would appear sensible to strengthen the input from the student perspective in this way, wherever it proves compatible with other agreed search committee priorities.

Expertise

Reported levels of the expertise present within governing bodies in the areas of education, finance and business management provided reassurance that corporations are generally qualified to undertake their role. The increase in community needs and local authority planning expertise were in line with the government's intention to alter governing-body composition to achieve greater accountability to the local community.

Recruitment and selection

The change in the way that search committees were conducting their business could be seen in the growth of open, transparent, yet rigorous governor recruitment and selection procedures. While generally seen as a welcome development, this had raised issues about the appropriateness of the related aspects of the Instruments and Articles to the situation of new local authority, staff or student governors. The names of such individuals usually came forward in the form of nominations, and as a result of elections. In these circumstances, it was understandable that attempts by search committees to vet the suitability of those concerned, prior to the confirmation of their appointment, sometimes created tensions. (As we have noted, this issue has since been addressed in England by further revisions to the Instruments and Articles of Government.)

Size

Other contradictions emerged in the struggle to achieve the optimum membership profile, commensurate with the needs of the corporation and the requirements of the Instruments and Articles. Many chairs and individual governors – especially business governors – would prefer a significantly smaller membership from the viewpoint of expediting business and furthering collective responsibility. Most also recognised, though, that the minimum demands of committee membership, plus the need to reflect the make-up of the local community, led inevitably to a total membership at, or very near to, that of their current establishment. On the whole, therefore, the changes in the composition of governing bodies seemed to be both in the direction desired by government and supported by the corporations affected.

5.3 Operation

Workload

The picture that emerges from this study is one of increasing rigour in the conduct of corporation business, bringing with it inevitable pressures on workload. Most corporations reported increases in the number of their formal or *ad hoc* committees during the period in question. It is clear that the level of commitment required to conduct the business inevitably involved many individual governors in attendance at more than 10 meetings per year. It may be that workload has now peaked, in general terms, as more corporations have 'got on top of' financial, personnel and property issues. However, other evidence suggests that the time devoted to educational matters will increase, without a commensurate reduction in those areas (see **section 5.4** below).

Taken overall, the most frequently convened committees were those dealing with finance, audit, and standards, the latter an indication of the impact of the former FEFC's advice on the need for a standards committee. Working groups and *ad hoc* committees typically included those dealing with:

- curriculum and quality issues
- students
- staff
- employer links
- equal opportunities
- property.

Attendance and remuneration

Despite the demands now made upon the time of governors, attendance levels at meetings were impressively high. Reports of problems achieving quorate meetings were relatively rare, though the pressures of workload and responsibility were said to be a factor in some resignations, and to add to problems of recruitment. Also striking was the widespread opposition to the introduction of any general system of remuneration for individual governors. However, there was a more mixed reaction to the possibility of payment of honoraria to committee chairs, and to governors effectively performing unpaid consultancy work for corporations. The case for some form of modest monetary acknowledgement in these instances may therefore warrant further investigation.

Role of committees

The combination of the increased rigour in the conduct of governance and the knock-on effects on workload have clearly led to a greater focus on the nature of the relationship between a corporation and its committees. The issue here is one of appropriate balance: an efficient expedition of business, avoiding on the one hand the reduction of the corporation to a mere 'rubber stamp' for committee 'cabals', and on the other a wasteful duplication of committee business that also implies mistrust. The LSDA publication *Governance today: rising to the challenge of raising quality and achievement* (Horsfall 2001b) sets out four broad ways of conducting the relationship, which overall span these two extremes. On the evidence of this research, the third approach would appear preferable. This

> *...entails the papers scrutinised by a Committee being presented a second time to the full Corporation, along with a note that summarises the Committee's deliberations and conclusions. The latter might point out areas where the whole Board judgement is needed, or identify good and bad areas of performance. The key to this approach lies in the guidance the Committee provides to the full Board. The 'Committee note' is quite different from the more common situation in which the paper is forwarded with the same covering management summary that accompanied it in the first place. It is a more active approach on the part of governors. The note also has the potential to avoid wasting Board members' time.*

Conduct of meetings

Striking the right balance between the business of the full corporation and that of its committees in this manner appears to be one of the keys to the successful conduct of meetings of the full board. This piece of research suggests that this was one of a number of features of effective practice concerning meetings of the

corporation, namely:

- efficient and effective use of committees to deal with detail, to make recommendations, and to direct the attention of the board to the key aspects over which it needs to maintain scrutiny

- clearly presented paperwork, with concise covering notes that flag the decisions required and direct governors' attention to specific aspects of the detail of papers already considered in committee that also call for close scrutiny by the full corporation

- proactive chairing, combining expedition of business with the active involvement of all members, the drawing out of minority viewpoints, identification and resolution of disagreement, and the clear summarising of decisions and action points

- building on challenging comments and questions from members to identify the subject of follow-up action and reporting at future meetings

- provision of a calendar of corporation and committee meeting dates, with key decision points and information needs flagged in advance.

Agenda setting

Our investigations have provided reassuring evidence of scrupulous and open procedures for assembling the agendas for meetings of corporations, based on effective and professional relationships between chairs, clerks and principals. Almost without exception, there was an absence of any suggestion that legitimate concerns were excluded from agendas, or that the board was otherwise steered away from important items of business. In many cases, of course, the agenda for meetings of the corporation followed a standard pattern, based round the reports from committees and linked to the annual cycle of business. However, such structures appeared naturally to encompass the weighty volume of business involving the full board, and to ensure that each issue was first given detailed consideration within the appropriate committee. Despite this evidence of rigour and transparency, though, the relative absence of proactive 'trawling' for agenda items with individual governors raises the possibility that this is one area in which procedures might still be tightened to good effect.

Clerking

Another issue that concerns the effective operation of governing bodies in the modern era is the crucial role of the clerk. Many of the clerks who were interviewed reported an increase over time in their workload and responsibilities. In general, clerking support to governance took up less time in sixth form colleges than in general FE/tertiary colleges, possibly as a result of their relatively smaller size, and/or their narrower curriculum offer. The reasons for other variations in clerking time between corporations are less obvious, and may stem, at least in part, from the involvement in some of deputy clerks or other

individuals to service committees and working groups. Overall, though, it is clear that the current role of the clerk is far broader and more demanding than that of simply providing efficient administrative support. Corporations look to their clerks for regular advice on the legal and ethical conduct of their affairs. Clerks also play a pivotal role in ensuring efficient and effective relationships between a corporation, its committees and the college management team. Effective clerking plays a major role in ensuring that the flow of associated information is both timely and appropriate to the monitoring and decision-making processes that are involved.

5.4 Roles and priorities

Changing priorities

Perhaps the most notable finding of this research project is the widespread consciousness of a change in the priorities of governance to focus relatively more on the educational character, direction and performance of the college, as opposed to the hitherto dominant 'organisational business' issues of finance, personnel and property. During the project, most colleges were in the process of crossing that threshold: organisational business issues were perceived to have occupied more of the time and energy of corporations in the past; educational issues had now come to the fore, and were seen as occupying pole position in the future. We should note, though, that few governors seemed to feel that organisational business issues would in future warrant significantly less time and attention than at present. This suggests that the challenges facing corporations could still increase, and that general gains in operational efficiency will be called for if workload is to be contained.

Nevertheless, the evidence indicates that the Standards Agenda and the need to oversee teaching and learning are today firmly embedded within corporations. In these areas, the government's wishes with regard to governance appear to have been put into operation. Further reinforcement of this trend in England no doubt stems from the focus on teaching and learning within the Common Inspection Framework, with its judgement of leadership and management – at all levels, including governance – in terms of their effect on teaching, learning and attainment.

Confronting educational issues

Most corporations, though, appeared to consider that they still had some way to go before they could feel confident that they had fully developed systems and procedures in place for evaluating educational performance, coupled with the necessary levels of governor experience and expertise. Individual governors perceived that the boards on which they served were most effective in the former priority areas of organisational business. Educational matters represented the area in which many governors felt least 'expert', and where they were least confident about observing the demarcation between the roles of governor, manager and teacher. (Feedback from LSDA's *Governance health check questionnaire* (2001b), and from governor training initiatives confirms this picture: individual governors have typically indicated that they felt most confident

in dealing with financial matters, but that curriculum planning caused them difficulty.)

Problems in getting to grips with educational performance issues seem to have been compounded by difficulties in defining and then obtaining the type of information that would enable corporations to agree appropriate targets and to monitor performance against them. Progress in this area was no doubt inhibited by the relatively recent development of many college management information systems (MIS) to supply timely data in the form required to support internal decision-making on academic matters, as opposed to meeting the requirements of external accountability to the funding council. As effective internal systems for monitoring student recruitment, attendance, satisfaction, retention and achievement had become embedded in colleges down to course level, though, there were clear signs of its impact in the quality of the reports being presented to corporations. In some cases, the committee responsible for academic performance issues had worked with college managers to develop agreed conventions for the timescale and format of reports, which had been successfully piloted and were now in place. As a result, the ability of governors to home in on key areas of academic strength and weakness was improving. Likewise, confidence in target setting appeared to be growing as corporations and management teams gained more experience in benchmarking with appropriate comparator institutions.

Curriculum planning

There were also signs of an increased concern on the part of governing bodies with the educational character of colleges as manifested in the 'curriculum offer', in part prompted by government initiatives such as Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in England, and Networks of Excellence in Wales. Here again, the concerns of a minority of governors, that their boards were not well enough informed to make a proper assessment of the match of the curriculum with community or employer needs, suggested some continuing need to improve the quality of market research evidence presented to them. Nevertheless, it was clear that a number of governing bodies now had a rigorous engagement with strategic curriculum planning.

Collective responsibility

Another notable feature of our findings was the evident concern of governing bodies to be able to demonstrate value for money in the services they provided to their surrounding communities. In this respect, too, government strictures appeared to have sunk home, no doubt reinforced by the high-profile difficulties of a minority of corporations, and the attendant controversy created at local and national level. This concern appeared to reinforce the sense of corporate collective responsibility. There was little evidence of a view that individual business or community governors were seeking to serve the interests of narrow sections. In the case of staff, student, and local authority governors, there were rather more instances where some of the individuals concerned appeared, in the eyes of other governors, to act in a representational rather than a corporate manner, but these were still relatively rare. Conversely, there were also some

instances where the Instruments and Articles might have been interpreted too rigidly by some corporations, excluding staff governors from discussions in which they did not feel themselves compromised from playing a proper corporate role.

5.5 Governor development

Self-assessment

The impact of the self-assessment requirements of the former funding councils was clearly seen in the evidence of the seriousness with which corporations took the process. While adding to an already onerous workload, most governors appeared to value the experience, and to believe that the self-critical approach that it had fostered had sharpened the performance of their boards. The annual 'away day' review sessions typically associated with governor self-assessment were also well regarded as an opportunity for critical reflection. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the changed arrangements in England under the Common Inspection Framework were viewed with mixed feelings: the increased focus on the learner was regarded as appropriate, but the removal of a separate inspection grading for governance was widely regretted. It may be that some of the associated worries were unfounded, and that the past experience of more specific self-assessment of governance will be put to good effect in the future by the concentration of corporations on their core business, accompanied by a cut in the associated paperwork. It should not be forgotten that annual self-assessment is still mandatory, and that those parts of the role of governors that the Common Inspection Framework does not consider will be dealt with by the parallel arrangements for Provider Financial Assurance (PFA).

The impact of the commitment to self-assessment and the clear sense of collective responsibility identified in our research were also seen in the decision of some corporations to consider developmental needs holistically, rather than as an aggregate of individual governors' requirements. This is likely to have implications for the way training needs analyses are conducted in future. Another feature of the increased involvement in self-assessment was the concern to identify and demonstrate the specific ways in which governors 'added value' to the colleges on whose boards they sat. Again, this had played a key part in sharpening the challenging, yet supportive, role played by governing bodies vis-à-vis college managements, by clarifying where their efforts should be concentrated. A remaining problem in the self-assessment of governance, though, was the as yet underdeveloped state of benchmarking with the operations of other corporations when compared, say, with benchmarking with other colleges' financial or academic performance. In part, the resolution of this problem is likely to depend upon the relevant comparative data becoming more widely available. In the meantime, mechanisms such as the regionally-based clerks' networks appeared to provide an effective conduit for the associated intelligence. Benchmarking of governing-body performance with that of comparator institutions clearly remains an area for development. Where colleges are near enough to facilitate contact, but not too close to provoke competitive tensions, joint sessions represent a potentially helpful way forward.

Priorities for development

There were some interesting apparent anomalies regarding future priorities for governor expertise and development between the collective feedback from colleges in the Stage 1 survey, and that from individual governors in Stage 2. In the former, finance still emerged as the most common priority area for strengthening the expertise of boards; in the latter, marketing and community needs were most commonly identified (perhaps reflecting concerns about the degree to which employer and community needs were being met – see **section 5.4** above). However, finance was the area most commonly flagged by individual governors as a personal developmental need, though in most cases, this seemed to reflect a perceived need to attain a better grasp of the intricacies of the funding mechanism. Next most commonly identified were educational issues. This was certainly consistent with the concerns about getting to grips fully with the monitoring of educational performance that were noted earlier (**section 5.4**). Here, the low indication from the Stage 1 survey of further developmental needs with regard to retention and achievement could be a cause for concern. It may be, though, that the rather higher priority accorded to benchmarking and target setting was in practice encompassing relevant developmental activities planned in these areas.

Development and training

There was extensive evidence of the regular use of questionnaire surveys of individual governors to identify their perceived needs for development and training; a support programme would then be designed around this. Most seemed happy that their needs were being taken account of in this way. As previously noted (**section 4.9**), there were some signs that induction still presented problems in terms of a steep learning curve for many new governors: this placed a premium on the need to tailor support to the individuals concerned. Meeting the needs of individuals with different levels of experience and expertise presented a continuous challenge. Though there appeared to be no lack of interest in governor training, the absence of any overwhelming demand for any single area of development raised problems in mounting cost-effective training events. The further calls on precious time that training entails inevitably also meant that actual activity fell some way below what would be required to meet perceived needs. Nevertheless, it is reassuring that at most colleges, the majority of governors were involved in some formal training activities – both in-house and 'open' events – and were generally satisfied with their value.

Contact with staff and students

Opportunities for continuous self-development were also seen as crucial to the furtherance of relevant experience and expertise. There was a widespread belief among governors that understanding of key educational issues would be enhanced by greater contact with staff and students. There was also a consciousness that this must be achieved in ways that scrupulously avoided the creation of 'back door' channels of lobbying which bypassed colleges' line-management arrangements. This commitment to more involvement with the day-

to-day life of the college was reflected in reports of increased governor attendance at occasions such as open days and award ceremonies, as well as at social events. Feedback from staff and student governors indicated that this trend had been noted and welcomed.

More formal arrangements, such as departmental attachments, or attendance at meetings with staff and students, tended to affect fewer governors – no doubt because of the additional demands on time that these entailed. Evidence of their effectiveness from the viewpoint of the governors concerned was mixed. There was some indication that work shadowing of staff and observation of lessons were regarded as worthwhile by a high proportion of those governors involved. Overall, though, the number of survey respondents to whom this applied was very small. These are areas that we would recommend reviewing, given the increased importance now being given to the need for governors to familiarise themselves with the core business of the college – the educational experience of the learners for whom it caters.

Support materials

During the project's timescale, the wider availability of governor support programmes and advice & guidance materials was beginning to have a beneficial impact. The LSDA's *Governance health check questionnaire* (2001b) had helped a number of corporations with self-assessment. The FENTO report *Governors and clerks in further education: benchmark standards* (2001) should now also be assisting with this activity, and with benchmarking. The former FEFC publications *The college governor* (2000a) and *Governor training materials* (2000b) and equivalent publications by FEFCW and ELWa in Wales, seem to have been used and found helpful by the large majority of governors across a variety of areas of need. Subsequently, training materials for clerks have appeared (LSDA 2001a). Since our fieldwork was completed, also, the publication of *Governance today: rising to the challenge of raising achievement and quality* (Horsfall 2001b), with its information analysis map of the role of the corporation and its committees in monitoring retention, achievement, progression, etc, should by now be meeting some of the guidance needs in the pressing area of educational performance.

5.6 The face of governance today

Generally speaking, the picture that emerges from our research is one of high levels of commitment and fulfilment on the part of governors. Large majorities appeared to be satisfied that they were making a worthwhile individual contribution, and that the boards on which they sat were, in general, performing an effective role and 'adding value'. Fulfilment in the role was at its highest where governors were most satisfied with the quality of the information that boards received concerning the performance of the college; the use made of their own expertise; and the clarity and appropriateness of the strategic direction of the corporation. Governors were typically characterised by long-standing interest and involvement in community service, and the associated role of education and training. There was little or no evidence of individuals being motivated primarily by the wish to further a particular cause or sectional interest.

Nevertheless, there were also clear concerns about the burdens of workload and responsibility. As we have noted, even at the minimum levels, attendance at corporation and committee meetings, and reading and absorbing the associated documentation involved significant time commitments. The frequent complaints about the volume of paperwork suggest that most governors would wholeheartedly support the 'war against bureaucracy' recently sponsored by the Association of Colleges (AoC). The other most commonly expressed irritation was with an 'accountability overkill' that interfered to an unnecessarily high degree in the independence of corporations. Many governors felt that the majority of corporations were being penalised in this way because of the failings of a few.

Overall, though, we can conclude that governance has changed in the broad directions intended by government and funding councils – albeit in many cases, there is still some way to go before the transition is complete. The profile and balance in the membership of some governing bodies was still out of kilter with the ideal. Most corporations were still getting to grips with educational issues. Despite these caveats, however, a clear majority of those we surveyed believed that the changes had, in general, served to improve the quality of governance. Few corporations could now be accused of functioning merely as a 'rubber stamp' for the recommendations of college management. Our evidence indicates that the majority had now developed a critical and challenging approach commensurate with proper and rigorous governance. At the same time, relationships with college management were generally supportive, open and trusting. In fact, the performance of governance and management appeared to be mutually supportive, creating a virtuous upward spiral of improvement. The more challenging style of governance had placed management teams on their mettle, to the benefit of all concerned.

5.7 Priorities for the future

The main purpose of this report has been to identify the key features of college governance, and the ways in which it has changed in recent years and is continuing to change. Other publications, including those listed in the report's **bibliography**, offer detailed and practical guidance to corporations and to individual governors on practical ways in which they can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. Our findings make it clear that while governing bodies are, in general, progressing in the right direction, there is still work to do before most will feel fully and justifiably confident of their ability to oversee the core educational role of the college. We therefore feel that, in conclusion, it is appropriate to refer readers specifically to key sources that are especially relevant to issues concerned with the experiences and outcomes of learners.

Student retention and achievement

The National Audit Office report *Improving student performance: how English further education colleges can improve student retention and achievement* (NAO 2001) provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of evidence of

the key factors that influence student performance. The summary at the beginning sets out the main findings under the headings:

- choosing the right course
- induction and support
- teaching and learning methods
- assessing performance.

This report comprises a concise guide to the nature of the problem. Recommendations in the summary suggest prime areas for the attention of governors, in terms of the information they request, and the directions given to management in fulfilment of the corporation's overseeing of educational performance and target setting. The 11 recommendations that concern colleges are as follows.

Colleges:

- could do more to get prospective students on the right courses and ensure that the college experience matches students' expectations by providing better pre-enrolment information about courses

- should consider providing more effective activities or other support to help students' integration into the college during the first few weeks, and give special support to late applicants and late joiners

- should encourage students to set up 'buddy' schemes or self-help groups, in order to help students to support each other throughout their course

- monitor student absence closely and allocate clear responsibility for timely follow-up of absences. Where necessary, they should also arrange training for staff in how to follow up promptly and sensitively any student absences

- need to identify and provide support to students with poor numeracy and literacy skills, including students for whom English is not their first language

- should continue to provide help to students who have weak study techniques, including advice on how to read and take notes effectively, and on how to set out written work coherently

- need to increase the rigour of methods used to identify and improve the weakest teaching and course delivery, and ensure consistency in the quality of courses

- should ensure prompt, regular and constructive feedback to students on their performance and should set targets for students (deadlines and target grades, where appropriate)

- should collect better information on the reasons for non-completion, including data on student employment while at college

- should make full use of the destinations data they collect; for example, in informing future course provision

- should set specific retention and achievement targets for groups of students whom they have identified as being at risk of non-completion and non-achievement.

Another concise and recent synopsis of the issues surrounding student retention and achievement is *Improving student retention and achievement: what do we know and what do we need to find out?* (Martinez 2001). This LSDA publication summarises the available evidence under the headings:

- demographic factors
- student motivation
- student decision-making
- college-related issues
- advice and guidance
- teaching and learning
- value-added research
- work-based training
- improving retention and achievement; and
- process of college improvement.

A comprehensive bibliography is also provided, for those wishing to study the topics concerned in more detail.

Role of governors in raising standards

In England, *Raising standards in further education: the work of college governors* (FEFC 2000d), one of the last national reports issued by the former FEFC, remains a useful source of examples of good practice that inspectors found in the monitoring and improvement by governors of the quality of education and training. Together, these follow the pattern of greater challenge and rigour that marks the way in which corporations are striving to operate, as identified in this report. Aspects of governors' performance that were noted as requiring further attention were:

- the thoroughness with which governors monitor the college's performance in relation to quality and standards in education and training

- the creation of an appropriate structure for monitoring the college's performance that respects the distinction between governance and management

- the recruitment of members, in addition to college staff, with expertise in education and training and in quality assurance

- terms of reference for standards committees that are neither too narrow nor too broad

- a systematic programme of induction and training for governors
- clearly established criteria against which the college's performance will be assessed by governors
- a planned annual cycle of target setting and review, appropriate for governors and managers, that allows governing bodies to set improvement targets for the following year
- the provision of clearly presented, accurate and timely information, at an appropriate level of aggregation, on which governors can base judgements about the performance of the college
- mechanisms to ensure that the work of the standards committee is reported in sufficient detail to the full governing body
- the promptness with which managers take appropriate action and report to the board
- the establishment of performance indicators for governance.

Our research indicates that many corporations continue to be concerned with making progress in these areas.

Management information

Another useful national report issued late in the life of the FEFC for England was *Using management information to raise standards* (FEFC 2001). This document aimed to contribute to the development of effective information systems by providing examples of good practice, focusing primarily on the use of MIS as they relate to students, their work and achievements. Key points to emerge from inspection evidence were as follows:

- governors should be fully aware ... of their major responsibilities for improving quality and standards
- it pays to have a group of governors who look at college performance data specifically from the point of view of standards and improving the quality of provision, and who consider information before it is presented to the full corporation
- briefing programmes for governors are vital and, in the best colleges, they involve a wide range of staff and, where appropriate, students
- developing the role of governors in self-assessment helps them to appreciate the issues associated with standards, quality assurance and improvement

- governors need to be clear about exactly which performance indicators they consider to be important, and how performance against these should be presented

- it helps staff to know what information governors consider when they determine strategies for improvement and associated targets.

For a brief, straightforward, and jargon-free guide to good practice in management information, please consult *It's a people thing: demystifying college information* (Owen, Alterman and Walkley 2000).

Target setting

The LSC has recently issued a concise guide to good practice in target setting, aimed at governors as well as at college managements and staff (LSC 2002). The publication reminds those concerned that the LSC expects them to set targets as part of the development plan agreed with the council, and that setting targets should be an important element of any plans for improving the quality of the service that is provided.

Recommendations include:

For the governing body or nominated sub-committee

Involve governors in the process of setting targets by establishing a sub-committee of the governing body to:

- conduct annual reviews of the college's targets; and
- regularly monitor the college's progress towards achieving its targets, using national benchmarks.

For course teams, managers and governors

Draw up a timetable for setting targets that can accommodate other requirements of your college, its governors and the LSC.

For everyone

Make sure that everyone knows what your organisations targets are by:

- using corporate systems like intranets or MIS to broadcast your targets
- publishing regular reports on the progress the college is making towards achieving its targets.

Monitor the progress of your college towards achieving its targets by:

- holding regular meetings of all staff and learners
- identifying the barriers that might be stopping people from achieving targets
- devising an action plan to help the college overcome these barriers, build on its existing strengths and rectify its weaknesses.

Establish benchmarks by setting up local groups to:

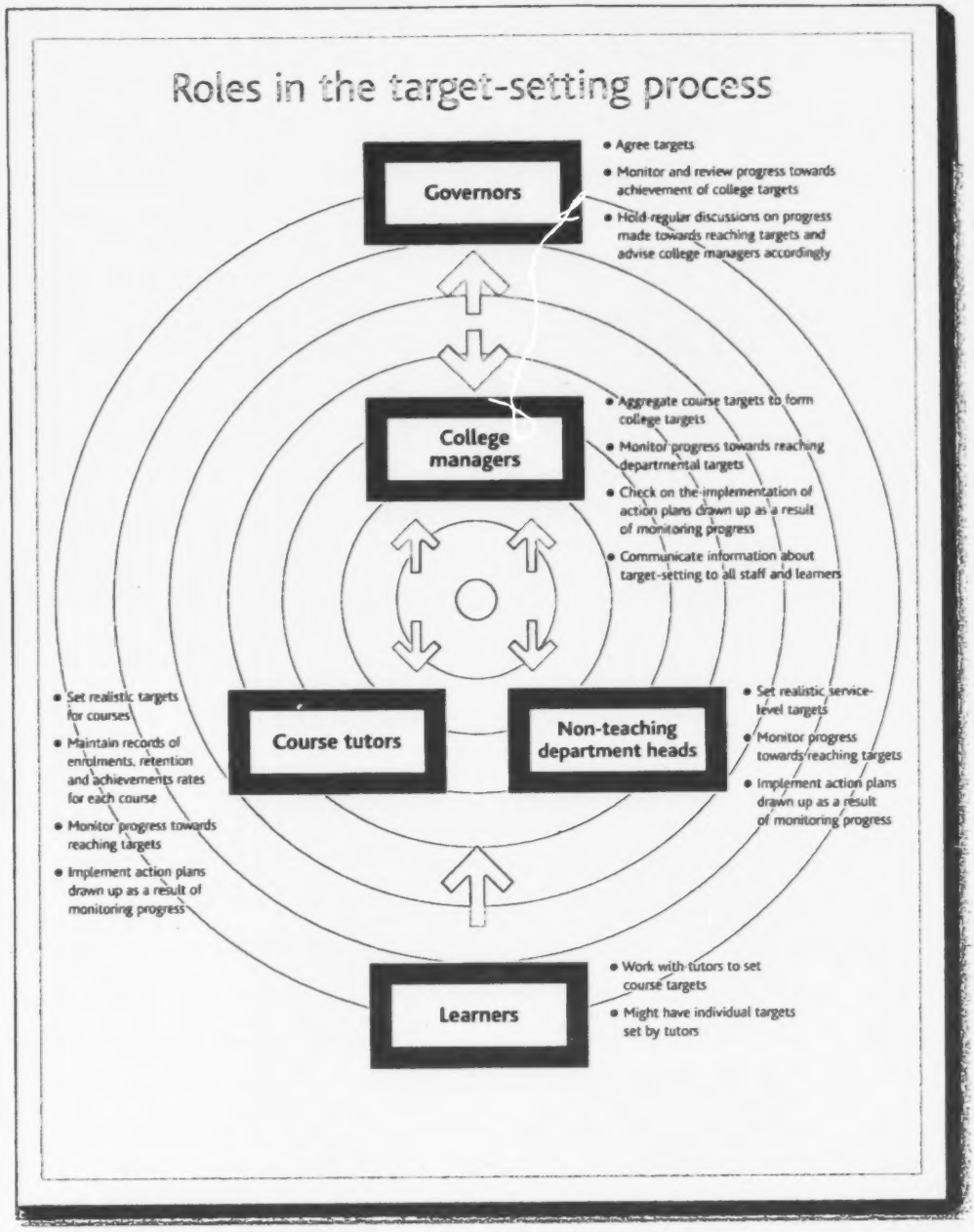
- gather together existing benchmarking information
- compare your college's results with those of similar institutions
- share good practice for setting targets and overcoming barriers to achieving targets.

Encourage continuous improvement by:

- helping individual members of staff to set their own challenging performance targets
- linking individual targets to staff appraisals or performance reviews.

A diagram (Figure 16) is also provided, which sets out the various roles in the target-setting process:

Figure 16 : Roles in the target-setting process


Roles in the target-setting process
Governors
• Agree targets
• Monitor and review progress towards achievement of college targets
• Hold regular discussions on progress made towards reaching targets and advise college managers accordingly
College managers
• Aggregate course targets to form college targets
• Monitor progress towards reaching departmental targets
• Check on the implementation of action plans drawn up as a result of monitoring progress
• Communicate information about target-setting to all staff and learners
Course tutors
• Set realistic targets for courses
• Maintain records of enrolments, retention and achievements rates for each course
• Monitor progress towards reaching targets
• Implement action plans drawn up as a result of monitoring progress
Non-teaching department heads
• Set realistic service-level targets
• Monitor progress towards reaching targets
• Implement action plans drawn up as a result of monitoring progress
Learners
• Work with tutors to set course targets
• Might have individual targets set by tutors

Source: *Targets: getting smarter*. LSC, 2002.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A concise guide to systematic methods of improvement that utilise others' good practice to improve your own processes is available in *A college guide to benchmarking* (Owen 1999).

The key question

Finally, it seems appropriate to conclude with a reminder – if any were needed – of the last of the seven questions that the Common Inspection Framework in England seeks to answer: namely, *how effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and in supporting all learners?*

If governing bodies are able to satisfy themselves, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and Estyn that leadership and management are effective in this way, then it requires the right systems to be in place, operated by competent and well-directed management. The emphasis on governance that is concerned primarily with improved standards in general, and the interests of individual learners in particular, provides the clear direction for the foreseeable future.

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Appendix 1

Stage 1 Questionnaire: survey of colleges

THE CHANGING FACE OF COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

feda quality learning skills

FEDA requests your co-operation in a major study of governing bodies of FE-sector colleges in England and Wales. The project is seeking to establish how the make-up and operation of governing bodies is changing in response to the Government's agenda for raising the standards of stewardship and accountability, and the reformed requirements for governing body membership. It also aims to review the associated developmental needs of governors, in the light of the support materials now in production by the FEFC.

As the first stage of this project, we request that on behalf of your governing body, you complete and return this questionnaire, which has also been sent to the Clerks to the Corporations of all other FE-sector colleges in England and Wales. In Stage 2 in May we will survey individual governors as at a sample of colleges, and in Stage 3 between November of this year and March 2001 we will visit some colleges to conduct interviews with governors and key staff, and to identify examples of effective practice.

Your answers will be treated confidentially. We will not release any information you supply in a form that could identify you personally, or your college. Please mark the questionnaire that follows, answering the questions using a black pen to mark the appropriate boxes like this ☑, or by writing in the spaces provided. When you have finished, seal the questionnaire in the FREEPOST envelope provided and send it back to us at the address indicated.Please try and return the form by 15th April.

Thank you for your help in this important survey.

Peter Davies

Peter Davies
Project Leader

Name of College

Name of person completing questionnaire

Contact details

Address:

Phone no.

Fax no.

E-mail

Job title

Length of service in post (years)

Survey : 1

Page : 1

COMPOSITION OF GOVERNING BODY

In the section that follows, please enter the numbers concerned in the boxes as appropriate, to indicate the size and composition of your current governing body. Then mark boxes to indicate any changes that have occurred since 31 July 1999.

Q1 **Employment background**

	Number		Change since 31/7/99		
	Male	Female	Increase	Decrease	Same
Business	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Co-opted	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Local Authority	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Other educational inst.	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Community organisation	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Student	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Parent	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Principal	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Other(s) [*please specify*]:					
☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Vacancies	☐☐		☐	☐	☐
Total	☐☐		☐	☐	☐

Q2 **Ethnicity**

	Number	Change since 31/7/99		
		Increase	Decrease	Same
Asian	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Black	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
White British	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
Other(s) [*please specify*]				
☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐

Q3 **Registered disabled**

Number	Change since 31/7/99		
	Increase	Decrease	Same
☐☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4 **Age**

	Number	Change since 31/7/99		
		Increase	Decrease	Same
18 - 29	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
30 - 39	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
40 - 49	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
50 - 59	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
60 - 69	☐☐	☐	☐	☐
70+	☐☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5 **Employment status**

	Number	Change since 31/7/99		
		Increase	Decrease	Same
Retired from full-time employment	☐☐	☐	☐	☐

Q6 **Please mark boxes as appropriate ☐ to indicate the background of the Chair of your governing body**

	Now	As at 31/7/99
Business	☐	☐
Co-opted	☐	☐
Local Authority	☐	☐
Other educational inst.	☐	☐
Parent	☐	☐
Other [*please specify*]	☐	☐
[ ]		
18 - 29	☐	☐
30 - 39	☐	☐
40 - 49	☐	☐
50 - 59	☐	☐
60 - 69	☐	☐
70+	☐	☐

	Now	As at 31/7/99
Male	☐	☐
Female	☐	☐
Asian	☐	☐
Black	☐	☐
White British	☐	☐
Other [*please specify*]	☐	☐
[ ]		
Registered disabled	☐	☐
Retired from full-time employment	☐	☐

Q7 **Please mark boxes as appropriate to indicate the background of the Clerk to your governing body:**

	Now	As at 31/7/99
College senior post holder	☐	☐
Other college senior manager	☐	☐
(please indicate area of responsibilities: Corporate Services, Curriculum, Finance, etc.)	[ ]	[ ]
Other member of college staff	☐	☐
External person	☐	☐
External clerking service	☐	☐

Q8 **Do you have a Deputy Clerk?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Q9 **Is the composition of your governing body likely to change further over the next three years?**
(Please mark the appropriate boxes, and say in what way you expect there to be changes)

☐ Employment background	
☐ Gender	
☐ Ethnicity	
☐ Disability	
☐ Age	
☐ Employment status	
☐ Other changes	

Q10 **What problems (if any) do you anticipate in recruiting new governors in order to achieve the desired composition of the governing body?**

MEETINGS

Q11 How many meetings per year are there of the:

Full governing body ☐☐
Search committee ☐☐
Audit committee ☐☐

Remuneration committee *(if applicable)* ☐☐
Finance and employment policy committee *(if applicable)* ☐☐
Standards committee *(if applicable)* ☐☐

Other formal sub-committees *(please specify)* ☐☐

Q12 At what time of day does the governing body normally meet?

☐ Morning
☐ Lunchtime
☐ Afternoon
☐ Late afternoon - early evening
☐ Evening

Q13 How long do meetings normally last?

☐ Less than 2 hours ☐ 2 - 3 hours ☐ More than 3 hours

Q14 What is the average attendance of governors at governing body meetings?

☐ 10 or less ☐ 11 - 15 ☐ 16 - 20 ☐ More than 20

Q15 How many governing body meetings had to be postponed during 1999 because of the lack of a quorum?

☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three or more

Q16 How many governing body meetings during 1999 became inquorate during the meeting?

☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three or more

Q17 What college working groups or ad hoc committees do your governors serve on?

☐ Curriculum Policy
☐ Staff development
☐ Employer links
☐ Appraisal
☐ Learning support
☐ Buildings and maintenance
☐ Equal opportunities
☐ Quality assurance
☐ Student services
☐ Student disciplinary procedures
☐ Personnel
☐ Other(s) - *(please specify below)*

Q18 **During 1999, roughly how much time did your governing body spend on the following aspects of the Corporation's business?**
(Please mark boxes as appropriate, using the 5-point scale, where 1 = a very small amount, and 5 = a very great amount.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Mission	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strategic planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality assurance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Curriculum planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Finance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personnel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Property	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluating academic performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Target setting (including use of benchmarks)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q19 **Roughly how much time per week on average is spent on clerking duties?**

☐ 8 hours or less
☐ 9 - 12 hours
☐ 13 - 16 hours
☐ 17 - 20 hours
☐ More than 20 hours

Q20 **To what extent do you anticipate changes during the current year in the relative time spent by the governing body?**

	Increase	Decrease	Same
Mission	☐	☐	☐
Strategic planning	☐	☐	☐
Quality assurance	☐	☐	☐
Curriculum planning	☐	☐	☐
Finance	☐	☐	☐
Personnel	☐	☐	☐
Property	☐	☐	☐
Evaluating academic performance	☐	☐	☐
Target setting (including use of benchmarks)	☐	☐	☐
Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	☐	☐	☐

GOVERNING BODY EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Q21 Please indicate below the areas of expertise present within your governing body. Then mark the boxes on the right to indicate any changes that have occurred since 31 July 1999.

Present		Change since 31/7/99 Increase	Decrease	Same
☐	Personnel management	☐	☐	☐
☐	Financial management	☐	☐	☐
☐	Property management	☐	☐	☐
☐	Law	☐	☐	☐
☐	Employer training needs	☐	☐	☐
☐	Company management	☐	☐	☐
☐	Marketing	☐	☐	☐
☐	IT	☐	☐	☐
☐	Community needs	☐	☐	☐
☐	Local Authority planning	☐	☐	☐
☐	Education	☐	☐	☐
☐	Other(s) - *(please specify)*	☐	☐	☐

Q22 In which areas (if any)does your governing body consider that it needs to strengthen its expertise further?

Q23 What opportunities are provided for governors to learn about the day - to - day work of the college?

- ☐ Work shadowing of staff
- ☐ Observation of classes
- ☐ Attachment to a specific department / section
- ☐ Attachment to manager with cross-college role
- ☐ Meetings with course teams
- ☐ Meetings with students
- ☐ Other(s) - *(please specify)*

Q24 **Roughly what percentage of the governing body attended a formal development or training session during 1999? Do you anticipate any changes during the current year?**

- ☐ 10% or less
- ☐ 11% - 25%
- ☐ 26% - 50%
- ☐ 51% - 75%
- ☐ Over 75%

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ Same

Q25 **What are your main future priority areas for governor development?**

Q26 **What plans have you got to meet these priorities?**

Q27 **In which areas do you feel that your governing body can provide examples of good practice in college governance?**

Q28 **Are there any other comments that you would like to make regarding effective ways of supporting improvements in the quality of college governance?**

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Please return it by 15th April to:

Graham Knight, FEDA, FREEPOST (BS6745), LONDON, SE11 5BR

Appendix 2

Breakdown of responses to Stage 1 questionnaire survey of colleges

In the tables that follow, the responses to the questionnaire survey are shown in aggregate and also broken down by type of college: *general further education and tertiary colleges* (FE/Tertiary); *sixth form colleges*; and *Specialist colleges* (the last comprising an amalgamation of the former FEFC categories: *agriculture and horticulture colleges; art, design and performing arts colleges* and *specialist designated institutions).*

Under each question* are listed:

- the numbers of respondents who selected the answers indicated;
- the percentages those numbers represent of the total number of respondents who answered the question concerned;
- the numbers of those who failed to answer the question concerned (*non-responses*); and
- the percentages those numbers represent of the total number of questionnaires returned by the group concerned.

Additionally, in the case of questions that employed a rating scale, the mean (average) rating for each group is indicated. Means are shown instead of numbers in the case of some of the questions that relate to the composition of the governing body.

(*No breakdown is provided in respect of the responses to Questions 27 and 28, but a summary is provided in the main body of the report.)

Composition of governing body

Q1 Employment background

(Figures in first table are means (averages) for each college)

Background/ No. of colleges (n)	FE/Tertiary		Sixth form		Specialist		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Business (n=236)	5.47	1.29	4.31	1.54	5.47	0.89	5.22	1.31
Coopted (n=224)	1.54	0.77	1.07	0.72	1.74	0.53	1.45	0.74
Local authority (n=211)	1.02	0.24	0.41	0.24	0.89	0.37	0.88	0.25
Other educational. institution. (n=97)	0.18	0.07	0.17	0.07	0.11	-	0.17	0.06
Community organisation (n=197)	0.80	0.58	0.61	0.28	1.11	0.26	0.78	0.49
Staff (n=235)	1.00	0.80	0.78	1.11	1.32	0.47	0.98	0.84
Student (n=223)	0.43	0.52	0.50	0.48	0.58	0.42	0.46	0.50
Parent (n=135)	0.05	0.06	0.67	0.69	-	0.05	0.18	0.19
Principal (n=227)	0.73	0.27	0.81	0.15	0.84	0.21	0.75	0.24
Other(s) (n=59)	0.11	0.03	1.54	0.55	1.15	0.48	0.51	0.18
Vacancies (n=127)	1.54		1.31		1.37		1.48	
Total	17.50		18.01		18.26		17.66	
Non-responses	*3 (2%)*		*3 (6%)*		*1 (5%)*		*7 (3%)*	

Business	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	4 (2%)	2 (4%)	-	6 (3%)
Decrease	131 (76%)	30 (65%)	13 (72%)	174 (74%)
Same	37 (22%)	14 (30%)	5 (28%)	56 (24%)
Non-responses	*3 (2%)*	*8 (15%)*	*1 (5%)*	*12 (5%)*

Coopted	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	50 (31%)	11 (25%)	6 (38%)	67 (30%)
Decrease	28 (17%)	5 (11%)	2 (13%)	35 (16%)
Same	86 (52%)	28 (64%)	8 (50%)	122 (55%)
Non-responses	*11 (6%)*	*10 (19%)*	*3 (16%)*	*24 (10%)*

Local authority	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	116 (75%)	26 (65%)	14 (88%)	156 (74%)
Decrease	3 (2%)	1 (3%)	1 (6%)	5 (2%)
Same	36 (23%)	13 (33%)	1 (6%)	50 (24%)
Non-responses	*20 (11%)*	*14 (26%)*	*3 (16%)*	*37 (15%)*

Other educational. institution	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	2 (3%)	3 (18%)	-	5 (5%)
Decrease	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (1%)
Same	70 (96%)	14 (82%)	7 (100%)	91 (94%)
Non-responses	*102 (58%)*	*37 (69%)*	*12 (63%)*	*151 (61%)*

Community	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	91 (61%)	20 (59%)	8 (62%)	119 (60%)
Decrease	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (1%)
Same	58 (39%)	14 (41%)	5 (39%)	77 (39%)
Non-responses	*25 (14%)*	*20 (37%)*	*6 (32%)*	*51 (21%)*

Staff	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	25 (15%)	4 (8%)	1 (6%)	30 (13%)
Decrease	6 (4%)	-	1 (6%)	7 (3%)
Same	135 (81%)	47 (92%)	16 (89%)	198 (84%)
Non-responses	*9 (5%)*	*3 (6%)*	*1 (5%)*	*13 (5%)*

Student	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	49 (30%)	16 (36%)	3 (17%)	68 (31%)
Decrease	3 (2%)	-	-	3 (1%)
Same	109 (68%)	28 (64%)	15 (83%)	152 (68%)
Non-responses	*14 (8%)*	*10 (19%)*	*1 (5%)*	*25 (10%)*

Parent	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	5 (6%)	9 (19%)	-	14 (10%)
Decrease	-	2 (4%)	-	2 (2%)
Same	76 (94%)	36 (77%)	7 (100%)	119 (88%)
Non-responses	*94 (54%)*	*7 (13%)*	*12 (63%)*	*113 (46%)*

Principal	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	-	-	-	-
Decrease	2 (1%)	-	-	2 (1%)
Same	160 (99%)	48 (100%)	17 (100%)	225 (99%)
Non-responses	*13 (7%)*	*6 (11%)*	*2 (11%)*	*21 (9%)*

Vacancies	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	40 (44%)	13 (43%)	3 (43%)	56 (44%)
Decrease	32 (36%)	6 (20%)	1 (14%)	39 (31%)
Same	18 (20%)	11 (37%)	3 (43%)	32 (25%)
Non-responses	*85 (49%)*	*21 (44%)*	*12 (63%)*	*121 (49%)*

Total	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	33 (35%)	9 (29%)	3 (30%)	45 (33%)
Decrease	10 (11%)	6 (19%)	-	16 (12%)
Same	51 (54%)	16 (52%)	7 (70%)	74 (55%)
Non-responses	*81 (46%)*	*23 (43%)*	*9 (47%)*	*113 (46%)*

Q2 Ethnicity

(Figures in first table are means (averages) for each college)

Ethnicity/No. of colleges (n)	FE/Tertiary.	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Asian (n=130)	0.58	0.43	0.05	0.51
Black (n=97)	0.35	0.15	0.05	0.28
White British (n=224)	14.38	15.54	14.74	14.66
Other(s) (n=19)	0.07	0.02	0.11	0.06
Non-responses	*15 (9%)*	*7 (13%)*	*2 (11%)*	*24 (10%)*

Asian	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	26 (27%)	6 (21%)	-	32 (25%)
Decrease	5 (5%)	3 (10%)	-	8 (6%)
Same	64 (67%)	20 (69%)	6 (100%)	90 (69%)
Non-responses	*80 (46%)*	*25 (46%)*	*13 (68%)*	*118 (48%)*

Black	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	18 (25%)	1 (5%)	1 (17%)	20 (21%)
Decrease	3 (4%)	1 (5%)	-	4 (4%)
Same	51 (71%)	17 (90%)	5 (83%)	73 (75%)
Non-responses	*103 (59%)*	*35 (65%)*	*13 (68%)*	*151 (61%)*

White British	FE/Tertiary.	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	25 (14%)	8 (17%)	3 (18%)	36 (16%)
Decrease	26 (16%)	5 (11%)	-	31 (14%)
Same	109 (68%)	34 (72%)	14 (82%)	157 (70%)
Non-responses	*15 (9%)*	*7 (13%)*	*2 (11%)*	*24 (10%)*

Q3 Registered disabled

(Figures in first table are means (averages) for each college)

Registered. disabled/No. of colleges (n)	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
(n=41)	0.18	0.12	0.16	0.17
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

Registered. disabled/No. of colleges (n)	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	7 (5%)	1 (2%)	1 (7%)	9 (4%)
Decrease	1 (1%)	-	1 (7%)	2 (1%)
Same	141 (95%)	45 (98%)	13 (87%)	199 (95%)
Non-responses	*26 (15%)*	*8 (15%)*	*4 (21%)*	*38 (15%)*

Q4 Age

(Figures in first table are means (averages) for each college)

Age/No. of colleges (n)	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
18–29 (n=178)	0.78	0.96	0.58	0.80
30–39 (n=163)	1.10	1.24	0.79	1.11
40–49 (n=194)	4.02	4.65	3.26	4.10
50–59 (n=193)	5.53	5.54	4.00	5.41
60–69 (n=184)	2.16	2.50	3.79	2.36
70+ (n=117)	0.30	0.56	0.74	0.39
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

18–29	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	39 (31%)	15 (39%)	3 (23%)	57 (32%)
Decrease	1 (1%)	1 (3%)	-	2 (1%)
Same	86 (68%)	23 (59%)	10 (77%)	119 (67%)
Non-responses	*49 (28%)*	*15 (28%)*	*6 (32%)*	*70 (28%)*

30–39	FE/Tertiary.	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	31 (27%)	6 (15%)	3 (27%)	40 (25%)
Decrease	12 (11%)	5 (13%)	-	17 (10%)
Same	70 (62%)	28 (72%)	8 (73%)	106 (65%)
Non-responses	*62 (35%)*	*15 (28%)*	*8 (42%)*	*85 (34%)*

40–49	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	42 (31%)	10 (22%)	5 (39%)	57 (29%)
Decrease	23 (17%)	4 (9%)	-	27 (14%)
Same	70 (52%)	32 (70%)	8 (62%)	110 (57%)
Non-responses	*40 (23%)*	*8 (15%)*	*6 (32%)*	*54 (22%)*

50–59	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	30 (22%)	11 (25%)	2 (14%)	43 (22%)
Decrease	30 (22%)	8 (18%)	3 (21%)	41 (21%)
Same	75 (56%)	25 (57%)	9 (64%)	109 (57%)
Non-responses	*40 (23%)*	*10 (19%)*	*5 (26%)*	*55 (22%)*

60–69	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	9 (7%)	5 (12%)	2 (14%)	16 (9%)
Decrease	30 (23%)	8 (19%)	5 (36%)	43 (23%)
Same	89 (70%)	29 (69%)	7 (50%)	125 (68%)
Non-responses	*47 (27%)*	*12 (22%)*	*14 (74%)*	*73 (28%)*

70+	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	9 (12%)	3 (10%)	1 (10%)	13 (11%)
Decrease	4 (5%)	2 (7%)	1 (10%)	7 (6%)
Same	64 (83%)	25 (83%)	8 (80%)	97 (83%)
Non-responses	*98 (56%)*	*24 (44%)*	*9 (47%)*	*131 (53%)*

Q5 Employment status

(Figures in first table are means (averages) for each college)

Status/No. of colleges (n)	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Retired (n=225)	2.55	3.13	3.37	2.74
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

Retired	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	28 (18%)	9 (18%)	1 (7%)	38 (17%)
Decrease	24 (15%)	6 (12%)	4 (27%)	34 (15%)
Same	108 (68%)	35 (70%)	10 (67%)	153 (68%)
Non-responses	*15 (9%)*	*4 (7%)*	*4 (21%)*	*23 (9%)*

Q6 Background of chair of governing body

Business	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	148 (85%)	31 (61%)	12 (63%)	191 (78%)
As at 31/7/99	151 (87%)	33 (65%)	14 (74%)	198 (81%)
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	*3 (6%)*	-	*4 (2%)*

Coopted	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	14 (8%)	3 (6%)	4 (21%)	21 (9%)
As at 31/7/99	14 (8%)	2 (4%)	3 (16%)	19 (8%)
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	*3 (6%)*	-	*4 (2%)*

Local authority	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	9 (5%)	2 (4%)	-	11 (5%)
As at 31/7/99	6 (3%)	2 (4%)	-	8 (3%)
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	*3 (6%)*	-	*4 (2%)*

Other educational institution	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	3 (2%)	4 (8%)	1 (5%)	8 (3%)
As at 31/7/99	1 (1%)	4 (8%)	-	5 (2%)
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	*3 (6%)*	-	*4 (2%)*

Other	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	1 (1%)	12 (24%)	1 (5%)	14 (6%)
As at 31/7/99	2 (1%)	9 (18%)	2 (11%)	13 (5%)
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	*3 (6%)*	-	*4 (2%)*

Male	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	159 (92%)	39 (78%)	14 (78%)	212 (88%)
As at 31/7/99	154 (89%)	38 (76%)	14 (78%)	206 (86%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	*4 (7%)*	*1 (5%)*	*7 (3%)*

Female	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	16 (9%)	11 (22%)	4 (22%)	31 (13%)
As at 31/7/99	15 (9%)	11 (22%)	4 (22%)	30 (12%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	*4 (7%)*	*1 (5%)*	*7 (3%)*

Asian	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (1%)
As at 31/7/99	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (1%)
Non-responses	*23 (13%)*	*4 (7%)*	*5 (26%)*	*32 (13%)*

Black	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	2 (1%)	-	-	2 (1%)
As at 31/7/99	1 (15)	-	-	1 (1%)
Non-responses	*23 (13%)*	*4 (7%)*	*5 (26%)*	*32 (13%)*

White British	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	149 (98%)	49 (98%)	14 (100%)	212 (98%)
As at 31/7/99	140 (92%)	47 (94%)	14 (100%)	201 (93%)
Non-responses	*23 (13%)*	*4 (7%)*	*5 (26%)*	*32 (13%)*

Other	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	-	1 (2%)	-	1 (1%)
As at 31/7/99	-	1 (2%)	-	1 (1%)
Non-responses	*23 (13%)*	*4 (7%)*	*5 (26%)*	*32 (13%)*

18–29	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (-%)
As at 31/7/99	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (-%)
Non-responses	*13 (7%)*	*2 (4%)*	*3 (16%)*	*18 (7%)*

30–39	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	4 (3%)	-	-	4 (2%)
As at 31/7/99	3 (2%)	-	-	3 (1%)
Non-responses	*13 (7%)*	*2 (4%)*	*3 (16%)*	*18 (7%)*

40–49	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	31 (19%)	9 (17%)	1 (6%)	41 (18%)
As at 31/7/99	28 (17%)	8 (15%)	1 (6%)	37 (16%)
Non-responses	*13 (7%)*	*2 (4%)*	*3 (16%)*	*18 (7%)*

50–59	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	70 (43%)	19 (37%)	8 (50%)	97 (42%)
As at 31/7/99	62 (38%)	19 (37%)	7 (44%)	88 (38%)
Non-responses	*13 (7%)*	*2 (4%)*	*3 (16%)*	*18 (7%)*

60–69	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	49 (30%)	18 (35%)	5 (31%)	72 (31%)
As at 31/7/99	58 (36%)	17 (33%)	6 (38%)	81 (35%)
Non-responses	*13 (7%)*	*2 (4%)*	*3 (16%)*	*18 (7%)*

70+	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	9 (6%)	6 (12%)	2 (13%)	17 (7%)
As at 31/7/99	10 (6%)	4 (8%)	2 (13%)	16 (7%)
Non-responses	*13 (7%)*	*2 (4%)*	*3 (16%)*	*18 (7%)*

Registered disabled	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	5 (3%)	1 (2%)	-	6 (2%)
As at 31/7/99	6 (3%)	1 (2%)	-	7 (3%)
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

Retired	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	70 (40%)	24 (44%)	5 (26%)	99 (40%)
As at 31/7/99	74 (42%)	22 (41%)	5 (26%)	101 (41%)
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

Q7 Background of clerk of governing body

College senior post holder	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	72 (41%)	17 (32%)	5 (26%)	94 (38%)
As at 31/7/99	80 (46%)	19 (35%)	6 (32%)	105 (42%)
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

Other college senior manager	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	33 (19%)	7 (13%)	7 (37%)	47 (19%)
As at 31/7/99	32 (18%)	8 (15%)	9 (47%)	49 (20%)
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

Other member of staff	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	27 (15%)	8 (15%)	3 (16%)	38 (15%)
As at 31/7/99	27 (15%)	10 (19%)	1 (5%)	38 (15%)
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

External person	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	47 (27%)	22 (41%)	4 (21%)	73 (29%)
As at 31/7/99	36 (21%)	16 (30%)	2 (11%)	54 (22%)
Non-responses	-	-	-	-

External service	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Now	2 (1%)	-	-	2 (1%)
As at 31/7/99	3 (2%)	-	1 (5%)	4 (2%)
Non-responses	-		-	-

Q8 Do you have a deputy clerk?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Yes	38 (22%)	4 (7%)	4 (21%)	46 (19%)
No	135 (78%)	50 (93%)	15 (79%)	200 (81%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	-	*2 (1%)*

Q9 Is the composition of your governing body likely to change over the next three years?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Employment background	76 (61%)	17 (57%)	7 (50%)	100 (60%)
Gender	77 (62%)	12 (40%)	8 (57%)	97 (58%)
Ethnicity	53 (43%)	12 (40%)	6 (43%)	71 (42%)
Disability	20 (16%)	3 (10%)	2 (14%)	25 (15%)
Age	48 (39%)	10 (33%)	4 (29%)	62 (37%)
Employment status	29 (23%)	4 (13%)	3 (21%)	36 (21%)

Other changes				
Non-responses	*51 (29%)*	*24 (44%)*	*5 (26%)*	*80 (32%)*

Nature of anticipated changes

Employment background	**FE/Tertiary**	**Sixth form**	**Specialist**	**Total**
Increase in business	5 (7%)	1 (3%)	1 (17%)	7 (6%)
Decrease in business	17 (22%)	7 (24%)	2 (33%)	26 (23%)
Increase in co-opted	6 (8%)	3 (10%)	-	9 (8%)
Decrease in co-opted	1 (1%)	1 (3%)	-	2 (2%)
Increase in local authority	11 (14%)	4 (14%)	-	15 (13%)
Increase in educational	3 (4%)	2 (7%)	-	5 (5%)
Increase in community	15 (20%)	4 (14%)	-	19 (17%)
Increase in staff	1 (1%)	-	1 (17%)	2 (2%)
Increase in student	1 (1%)	-	1 (17%)	2 (2%)
Increase in parent	1 (1%)	-	1 (17%)	2 (2%)
Other increase	15 (20%)	5 (17%)	2 (33%)	22 (20%)
Other decrease	3 (4%)	3 (10%)	-	6 (5%)
Subject to skills evaluation	16 (21%)	5 (17%)	1 (17%)	22 (20%)
Other	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (1%)
Unspecified	5 (7%)	3 (10%)	-	8 (7%)
Non-responses	*98 (56%)*	*25 (46%)*	*13 (68%)*	*136 (55%)*

Gender	**FE/Tertiary**	**Sixth form**	**Specialist**	**Total**
Increase in female	67 (79%)	20 (87%)	8 (100%)	95 (82%)
Possible increase in female	4 (5%)	1 (4%)	-	5 (4%)
Non-responses	*90 (51%)*	*31 (57%)*	*11 (58%)*	*132 (53%)*

Ethnicity	**FE/Tertiary**	**Sixth form**	**Specialist**	**Total**
Increase in ethnic minority	50 (69%)	14 (67%)	4 (50%)	68 (67%)
Possible Increase in ethnic	4 (6%)	1 (5%)	1 (13%)	6 (6%)
Non-responses	*103 (59%)*	*33 (61%)*	*11 (58%)*	*147 (59%)*

Disability	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase in disabled	14 (61%)	2 (33%)	-	16 (41%)
Possible increase in disabled	7 (30%)	2 (33%)	1 (100%)	10 (33%)
Non-responses	*152 (87%)*	*48 (89%)*	*18 (95%)*	*218 (88%)*

Age	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Reduction in age profile	37 (77%)	12 (75%)	6 (86%)	55 (76%)
Increase in age profile	4 (8%)	2 (13%)	1 (14%)	7 (10%)
Non-responses	*127 (73%)*	*38 (70%)*	*12 (63%)*	*177 (71%)*

Employment status	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase in employed	6 (23%)	3 (21%)	-	9 (21%)
Decrease in employed	7 (27%)	4 (29%)	-	11 (26%)
Increase in retired	3 (12%)	1 (7%)	1 (33%)	5 (12%)
Decrease in retired	4 (15%)	2 (14%)	-	6 (14%)
Increase in unemployed	1 (4%)	1 (7%)	-	2 (5%)
Non-responses	*149 (85%)*	*40 (74%)*	*16 (84%)*	*205 (83%)*

Q10 What problems (if any) do you anticipate in recruiting new governors in order to achieve the desired composition of the governing body?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Time demands	47 (31%)	13 (29%)	7 (44%)	67 (32%)
Pressures of increased accountability	27 (18%)	7 (16%)	4 (25%)	38 (18%)
Required skills in short supply	20 (13%)	4 (9%)	2 (13%)	26 (12%)
Can't get community governors	17 (11%)	3 (7%)	2 (13%)	22 (10%)
Can't get ethnic governors	14 (9%)	5	1 (6%)	20 (10%)
No tangible reward	13 (9%)	2 (4%)	3 (19%)	18 (9%)
Can't get local authority governors	8 (5%)	4 (9%)	3 (19%)	15 (7%)
Can't get female governors	10 (7%)	3 (7%)	1 (6%)	14 (7%)
General difficulties in recruitment	8 (5%)	4 (9%)	1 (6%)	13 (6%)
Can't get student governors	8 (5%)	2 (4%)	1 (6%)	11 (5%)
Can't get parent governors	6 (4%)	2 (4%)	1 (6%)	9 (4%)
Difficulties in 'retiring' older governors	2 (1%)	-	-	2 (1%)
Can't get staff governors	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (1%)
Other	12 (8%)	4 (9%)	3 (19%)	19 (9%)
None	38 (25%)	11 (24%)	1 (6%)	50 (24%)
Non-responses	*25 (14%)*	*9 (17%)*	*3 (16%)*	*37 (15%)*

Meetings

Q11 How many meetings a year are there of the governing body/its committees?

(Figures show the mean (average) numbers per college)

Committee/No. of colleges. (n)	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Overall mean
Full governing body (n=242)	5.17	5.02	5.11	5.13
Remuneration (n=232)	1.63	1.74	1.53	1.65
Search (n=223)	2.87	2.80	3.12	2.88
Finance (n=228)	5.85	5.56	5.75	5.78
Audit (n=245)	3.84	3.67	3.44	3.77
Standards (n=150)	3.34	3.63	2.44	3.35
Other (n=139)	4.30	3.51	5.30	4.16

Q12 At what time of day does the governing body normally meet?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Morning	13 (8%)	2 (4%)	9 (47%)	24 (10%)
Lunchtime	2 (1%)	-	-	2 (1%)
Afternoon	22 (13%)	3 (6%)	1 (5%)	26 (11%)
Late afternoon – early evening	66 (38%)	19 (35%)	6 (32%)	91 (37%)
Evening	69 (40%)	30 (56%)	3 (16%)	102 (42%)
Non-responses	*3 (2%)*	-	-	*3 (1%)*

Q13 How long do the meetings normally last?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Less than 2 hours	13 (8%)	7 (14%)	1 (5%)	21 (9%)
2–3 hours	138 (80%)	40 (77%)	12 (63%)	190 (78%)
More than 3 hours	22 (13%)	5 (10%)	6 (32%)	33 (14%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	*2 (4%)*	-	*4 (2%)*

Q14 What is the average attendance of governors at governing body meetings?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
10 or fewer	20 (12%)	2 (4%)	1 (5%)	23 (9%)
11–15	132 (76%)	33 (62%)	11 (58%)	176 (72%)
16–20	22 (13%)	18 (34%)	7 (37%)	47 (19%)
More than 20	-	-	-	-
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	*1 (2%)*	-	*2 (1%)*

Q15 How many governing body meetings had to be postponed during 1999 because of the lack of a quorum?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
None	159 (93%)	46 (85%)	17 (90%)	222 (91%)
One	8 (5%)	7 (13%)	1 (5%)	16 (7%)
Two	4 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (5%)	6 (3%)
Three or more	-	-	-	-
Non-responses	*4 (2%)*	-	-	*4 (2%)*

Q16 How many governing body meetings during 1999 became inquorate during the meeting?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
None	155 (90%)	50 (93%)	16 (84%)	221 (90%)
One	14 (8%)	4 (7%)	2 (11%)	20 (8%)
Two	4 (2%)	-	1 (5%)	5 (2%)
Three or more	-	-	-	-
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	-	*2 (1%)*

Q17 What college working groups or *ad hoc* committees do your governors serve on?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Curriculum policy	24 (20%)	8 (20%)	5 (39%)	37 (21%)
Equal opportunities	36 (30%)	10 (24%)	3 (23%)	49 (28%)
Staff development	5 (4%)	3 (7%)	1 (8%)	9 (5%)
Quality assurance	43 (36%)	24 (59%)	9 (69%)	76 (43%)
Employer links	32 (26%)	3 (7%)	6 (46%)	41 (23%)
Student services	21 (17%)	6 (15%)	3 (23%)	30 (17%)
Appraisal	18 (15%)	5 (12%)	2 (15%)	25 (14%)
Student disciplinary procedures	34 (28%)	3 (7%)	1 (8%)	38 (22%)
Learning support	11 (9%)	2 (5%)	1 (8%)	14 (8%)
Personnel	22 (18%)	8 (20%)	3 (23%)	33 (19%)
Buildings and maintenance	46 (38%)	15 (37%)	1 (8%)	62 (35%)
Other(s)	32 (26%)	7 (17%)	2 (15%)	41 (23%)
Non-responses	*54 (31%)*	*13 (24%)*	*6 (32%)*	*73 (29%)*

Q18 During 1999, roughly how much time did your governing body spend on the following aspects of the corporation's business?

Mission	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	36 (21%)	14 (26%)	5 (26%)	55 (22%)
2	56 (32%)	22 (41%)	8 (42%)	86 (35%)
3	52 (30%)	10 (19%)	6 (32%)	68 (28%)
4	18 (10%)	7 (13%)	-	25 (10%)
5 A very great amount	11 (6%)	1 (2%)	-	12 (5%)
Mean	2.49	2.24	2.05	2.40
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	-	*2 (1%)*

Strategic planning	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	6 (4%)	2 (4%)	-	8 (3%)
2	19 (11%)	7 (13%)	4 (21%)	30 (12%)
3	68 (39%)	21 (40%)	8 (42%)	97 (40%)
4	54 (31%)	18 (34%)	5 (26%)	77 (31%)
5 A very great amount	26 (15%)	5 (9%)	2 (11%)	33 (14%)
Mean	3.43	3.32	3.26	3.40
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	*1 (2%)*	-	*3 (1%)*

Quality assurance	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	3 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (5%)	5 (2%)
2	24 (14%)	6 (11%)	7 (37%)	37 (15%)
3	77 (45%)	26 (49%)	9 (47%)	112 (46%)
4	45 (26%)	15 (28%)	2 (11%)	62 (26%)
5 A very great amount	22 (13%)	5 (9%)	-	27 (11%)
Mean	3.35	3.32	2.63	3.28
Non-responses	*4 (2%)*	*1 (2%)*	-	*5 (2%)*

Curriculum planning	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	27 (16%)	5 (9%)	5 (26%)	37 (15%)
2	67 (39%)	19 (35%)	7 (37%)	93 (38%)
3	48 (28%)	22 (41%)	6 (32%)	76 (31%)
4	26 (15%)	7 (13%)	1 (5%)	34 (14%)
5 A very great amount	4 (2%)	1 (2%)	-	5 (2%)
Mean	2.49	2.63	2.16	2.50
Non-responses	*3 (2%)*	-	-	*3 (1%)*

Finance	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	5 (3%)	2 (4%)	1 (5%)	8 (3%)
2	4 (2%)	2 (4%)	-	6 (2%)
3	19 (11%)	4 (7%)	3 (16%)	26 (11%)
4	65 (37%)	27 (50%)	3 (16%)	95 (39%)
5 A very great amount	81 (47%)	19 (35%)	12 (63%)	112 (45%)
Mean	4.22	4.09	4.32	4.20
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	-	-	*1 (-%)*

Personnel	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	6 (3%)	1 (2%)	1 (5%)	8 (3%)
2	43 (25%)	13 (24%)	4 (21%)	60 (24%)
3	71 (41%)	22 (41%)	10 (53%)	103 (42%)
4	44 (25%)	14 (26%)	3 (16%)	61 (25%)
5 A very great amount	10 (6%)	4 (7%)	1 (5%)	15 (6%)
Mean	3.05	3.13	2.95	3.06
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	-	-	*1 (-%)*

Property	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	12 (7%)	3 (6%)	-	15 (6%)
2	32 (18%)	11 (20%)	3 (16%)	46 (19%)
3	43 (25%)	12 (22%)	8 (42%)	63 (26%)
4	51 (29%)	15 (28%)	3 (16%)	69 (28%)
5 A very great amount	36 (21%)	13 (24%)	5 (26%)	54 (22%)
Mean	3.39	3.44	3.53	3.41
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	-	-	*1 (-%)*

Evaluating academic performance	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	6 (4%)	-	2 (11%)	8 (3%)
2	35 (21%)	5 (9%)	8 (42%)	48 (20%)
3	65 (39%)	25 (46%)	5 (26%)	95 (39%)
4	52 (31%)	18 (33%)	3 (16%)	73 (30%)
5 A very great amount	11 (7%)	6 (11%)	1 (5%)	18 (7%)
Mean	3.16	3.46	2.63	3.19
Non-responses	*6 (3%)*	-	-	*6 (2%)*

Target setting (including use of benchmarks)	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 A very small amount	4 (2%)	-	1 (5%)	5 (2%)
2	40 (23%)	11 (20%)	7 (37%)	58 (24%)
3	72 (42%)	26 (48%)	8 (42%)	106 (43%)
4	51 (30%)	15 (28%)	3 (16%)	69 (28%)
5 A very great amount	6 (4%)	2 (4%)	-	8 (3%)
Mean	3.09	3.15	2.68	3.07
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	-	*2 (1%)*

Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
1 a very small amount	4 (2%)	-	1 (7%)	5 (2%)
2	28 (16%)	10 (19%)	1 (7%)	39 (16%)
3	61 (35%)	24 (44%)	10 (56%)	95 (39%)
4	61 (35%)	16 (30%)	3 (17%)	80 (33%)
5 a very great amount	19 (11%)	4 (7%)	3 (17%)	26 (11%)
Mean	3.36	3.26	3.33	3.34
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	*1 (5%)*	*3 (1%)*

Q19 Roughly how much time per week on average is spent on clerking duties?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
8 hours or less	25 (15%)	20 (37%)	3 (17%)	48 (20%)
9–12 hours	39 (23%)	13 (24%)	6 (33%)	58 (24%)
13–16 hours	31 (18%)	11 (20%)	6 (33%)	48 (20%)
17–20 hours	47 (27%)	8 (15%)	2 (11%)	57 (23%)
More than 20 hours	31 (18%)	2 (4%)	1 (6%)	34 (14%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	*1 (5%)*	*3 (1%)*

Q20 To what extent do you anticipate changes during the current year in the relative time spent by the governing body?

Mission	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	57 (33%)	21 (40%)	8 (42%)	86 (35%)
Decrease	8 (5%)	3 (6%)	2 (11%)	13 (5%)
Same	108 (62%)	29 (55%)	9 (47%)	146 (60%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	*1 (2%)*	-	*3 (1%)*

Strategic planning	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	98 (56%)	24 (44%)	11 (58%)	133 (54%)
Decrease	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	-	2 (1%)
Same	75 (43%)	29 (54%)	8 (42%)	112 (45%)
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	-	-	*1 (-%)*

Quality assurance	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	114 (66%)	25 (46%)	17 (90%)	156 (63%)
Decrease	-	1 (2%)	-	1 (-%)
Same	59 (34%)	28 (52%)	2 (11%)	89 (36%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	-	*2 (1%)*

Curriculum planning	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	76 (44%)	18 (33%)	13 (68%)	107 (44%)
Decrease	2 (1%)	-	-	2 (1%)
Same	94 (55%)	36 (67%)	6 (32%)	136 (56%)
Non-responses	*3 (2%)*	-	-	*3 (1%)*

Finance	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	21 (12%)	5 (9%)	3 (16%)	29 (12%)
Decrease	26 (15%)	2 (4%)	3 (16%)	31 (13%)
Same	126 (73%)	46 (87%)	13 (68%)	185 (76%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	*1 (2%)*	-	*3 (1%)*

Personnel	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	27 (16%)	4 (7%)	-	31 (13%)
Decrease	11 (6%)	4 (7%)	1 (5%)	16 (7%)
Same	135 (78%)	46 (85%)	18 (95%)	199 (81%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	-	*2 (1%)*

Property	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	60 (35%)	28 (54%)	2 (11%)	90 (37%)
Decrease	21 (12%)	4 (8%)	1 (5%)	26 (11%)
Same	91 (53%)	20 (39%)	16 (84%)	127 (52%)
Non-responses	*3 (2%)*	*2 (4%)*	-	*5 (2%)*

Evaluating academic performance	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	114 (66%)	23 (43%)	14 (74%)	151 (61%)
Decrease	2 (1%)	-	-	2 (1%)
Same	57 (33%)	31 (57%)	5 (26%)	93 (38%)
Non-responses	*2 (1%)*	-	-	*2 (1%)*

Target setting (including use of benchmarks)	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	114 (67%)	25 (47%)	15 (79%)	154 (64%)
Decrease	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (-%)
Same	55 (32%)	28 (53%)	4 (21%)	87 (36%)
Non-responses	*5 (3%)*	*1 (2%)*	-	*6 (2%)*

Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	116 (67%)	26 (48%)	12 (63%)	154 (62%)
Decrease	-	-	-	-
Same	58 (33%)	28 (52%)	7 (37%)	93 (38%)
Non-responses	*1 (1%)*	-	-	*1 (-%)*

Governing body experience, expertise and development needs

Q21 Areas of expertise present within governing body

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Personnel management	145 (88%)	43 (84%)	14 (74%)	202 (86%)
Financial management	161 (98%)	47 (92%)	19 (100%)	227 (97%)
Property management	110 (67%)	37 (73%)	14 (74%)	161 (69%)
Law	107 (65%)	42 (82%)	10 (53%)	159 (68%)
Employer training needs	122 (74%)	31 (61%)	13 (68%)	166 (71%)
Company management	159 (97%)	47 (92%)	17 (90%)	223 (95%)
Marketing	87 (53%)	18 (35%)	6 (32%)	111 (47%)
IT	73 (45%)	22 (43%)	7 (37%)	102 (44%)
Community needs	148 (90%)	36 (71%)	8 (42%)	192 (82%)
Local authority planning	126 (77%)	35 (69%)	11 (58%)	172 (74%)
Education	152 (93%)	50 (98%)	17 (90%)	219 (94%)
Other	28 (17%)	9 (18%)	5 (26%)	42 (18%)
Non-responses	*11 (6%)*	*3 (6%)*	-	*14 (6%)*

Changes in expertise since 31 July 1999

Personnel management	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	15 (10%)	2 (4%)	1 (8%)	18 (9%)
Decrease	17 (12%)	2 (4%)	-	19 (9%)
Same	111 (78%)	42 (91%)	11 (92%)	164 (78%)
Non-responses	*32 (18%)*	*8 (15%)*	*7 (37%)*	*47 (19%)*

Financial management	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	20 (13%)	7 (14%)	3 (17%)	30 (14%)
Decrease	15 (10%)	2 (4%)	1 (6%)	18 (8%)
Same	116 (77%)	39 (80%)	14 (77%)	169 (78%)
Non-responses	*24 (14%)*	*6 (11%)*	*1 (5%)*	*31 (13%)*

Property management	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	6 (5%)	1 (3%)	2 (13%)	9 (5%)
Decrease	9 (7%)	2 (5%)	-	11 (6%)
Same	108 (88%)	37 (93%)	13 (87%)	158 (89%)
Non-responses	*52 (42%)*	*14 (26%)*	*4 (21%)*	*70 (28%)*

Law	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	9 (7%)	2 (5%)	1 (9%)	12 (7%)
Decrease	9 (7%)	1 (2%)	-	10 (6%)
Same	106 (85%)	41 (93%)	10 (91%)	157 (88%)
Non-responses	*51 (29%)*	*10 (19%)*	*8 (42%)*	*69 (28%)*

Employer training needs	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	6 (5%)	5 (15%)	1 (8%)	12 (7%)
Decrease	9 (8%)	-	-	9 (5%)
Same	103 (87%)	29 (85%)	11 (92%)	143 (87%)
Non-responses	*57 (33%)*	*20 (37%)*	*7 (37%)*	*84 (34%)*

Company management	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	5 (3%)	4 (9%0	3 (20%)	12 (6%)
Decrease	17 (12%)	-	-	17 (8%)
Same	122 (85%)	43 (91%)	12 (80%)	177 (86%)
Non-responses	*31 (18%)*	*7 (13%)*	*4 (21%)*	*42 (17%)*

Marketing	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	14 (15%)	1 (4%)	1 (14%)	16 (13%)
Decrease	3 (3%)	2 (9%)	-	5 (4%)
Same	77 (82%)	20 (87%)	6 (86%)	103 (83%)
Non-responses	*81 (46%)*	*31 (57%)*	*12 (63%)*	*124 (50%)*

IT	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	9 (10%)	3 (11%)	1 (14%)	13 (11%)
Decrease	8 (9%)	1 (4%)	1 (14%)	10 (8%)
Same	69 (80%)	23 (85%)	5 (71%)	97 (81%)
Non-responses	*89 (51%)*	*27 (50%)*	*12 (63%)*	*128 (52%)*

Community needs	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	78 (56%)	18 (47%)	7 (64%)	103 (55%)
Decrease	2 (1%)	-	-	2 (1%)
Same	60 (43%)	20 (53%)	4 (36%)	84 (44%)
Non-responses	*35 (20%)*	*16 (30%)*	*8 (42%)*	*59 (24%)*

Local authority planning	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	60 (48%)	14 (34%)	7 (58%)	81 (45%)
Decrease	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (1%)
Same	65 (52%)	27 (66%)	5 (42%)	97 (54%)
Non-responses	*49 (28%)*	*13 (24%)*	*7 (37%)*	*69 (39%)*

Education	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	39 (28%)	8 (17%)	9 (53%)	56 (28%)
Decrease	6 (4%)	1 (2%)	-	7 (3%)
Same	93 (67%)	39 (81%)	8 (47%)	140 (69%)
Non-responses	*37 (21%)*	*6 (11%)*	*2 (11%)*	*45 (18%)*

Other	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	5 (16%)	2 (20%)	-	7 (15%)
Decrease	2 (6%)	1 (10%)	-	3 (6%)
Same	25 (78%)	7 (70%)	5 (100%)	37 (79%)
Non-responses	*143 (82%)*	*44 (81%)*	*14 (74%)*	*201 (81%)*

Q22 In which areas (if any) does your governing body consider that it needs to strengthen its expertise further?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Finance	44 (31%)	16 (33%)	4 (29%)	64 (31%)
Law	25 (18%)	12 (25%)	5 (36%)	42 (21%)
Property/estates	28 (20%)	12 (25%)	2 (14%)	42 (21%)
Marketing	18 (13%)	8 (17%)	3 (21%)	29 (14%)
IT	15 (11%)	7 (15%)	5 (36%)	27 (13%)
Personnel	16 (11%)	5 (10%)	5 (36%)	26 (13%)
Community	14 (9%)	7 (15%)	-	21 (10%)
Health and social care	5 (4%)	-	-	5 (2%)
Other	44 (31%)	13 (27%)	6 (43%)	63 (31%)
None	22 (15%)	3 (6%)	1 (7%)	26 (13%)
Non-responses	*32 (18%)*	*6 (11%)*	*5 (26%)*	*43 (17%)*

Q23 What opportunities are provided for governors to learn about the day-to-day work of the college?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Work shadowing of staff	6 (4%)	4 (8%)	2 (12%)	12 (5%)
Observation of classes	20 (13%)	15 (31%)	3 (18%)	38 (17%)
Attachment to a specific department / section	96 (61%)	27 (55%)	11 (65%)	134 (60%)
Attachment to a manager with a cross-college role	56 (36%)	17 (35%)	7 (41%)	80 (36%)
Meetings with course teams	68 (43%)	25 (51%)	11 (65%)	104 (47%)
Meetings with students	80 (51%)	28 (57%)	9 (53%)	117 (53%)
Other	43 (27%)	13 (27%)	4 (24%)	60 (27%)
Non-responses	*18 (10%)*	*5 (9%)*	*2 (11%)*	*25 (10%)*

Q24 Roughly what percentage of the governing body attended a formal development or training session during 1999?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
10% or less	20 (12%)	10 (19%)	1 (5%)	31 (13%)
11%-25%	11 (6%)	3 (6%)	3 (16%)	17 (7%)
26%-50%	25 (15%)	5 (10%)	2 (11%)	32 (13%)
51%-75%	41 (24%)	12 (23%)	4 (21%)	57 (24%)
Over 75%	75 (44%)	22 (42%)	9 (47%)	106 (44%)
Non-responses	*3 (2%)*	*2 (4%)*	-	*5 (2%)*

Anticipated changes during the current year

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Increase	69 (47%)	19 (42%)	8 (44%)	96 (46%)
Decrease	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	-	2 (1%)
Same	78 (53%)	25 (56%)	10 (56%)	113 (54%)
Non-responses	*27 (15%)*	*9 (17%)*	*1 (5%)*	*37 (15%)*

Q25 What are your main future priority areas for governor development?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Training/ updating	44 (27%)	15 (30%)	3 (18%)	62 (27%)
Curriculum planning	43 (27%)	11 (22%)	5 (29%)	59 (26%)

Benchmarking/ target setting	42 (26%)	12 (24%)	2 (12%)	56 (25%)
Strategic planning	40 (25%)	14 (28%)	2 (12%)	56 (25%)
Quality/ standards	34 (21%)	10 (20%)	8 (47%)	52 (23%)
Funding/finance	27 (17%)	18 (36%)	4 (24%)	49 (22%)
LSC	29 (18%)	10 (20%)	6 (35%)	45 (20%)
Induction	27 (17%)	4 (8%)	5 (29%)	36 (16%)
Self-assessment	24 (15%)	6 (12%)	3 (18%)	33 (15%)
Awareness of Instruments/ Articles/roles, etc	18 (5%)	3 (6%)	5 (29%)	26 (11%)
Buildings links with staff and students	11 (7%)	4 (8%)	3 (18%)	18 (8%)
Inspection	10 (6%)	1 (2%)	2 (12%)	13 (6%)
Retention and achievement	7 (4%)	-	-	7 (3%)
Other	24 (15%)	11 (22%)	5 (29%)	40 (18%)
Non-responses	*14 (8%)*	*4 (7%)*	*2 (11%)*	*20 (8%)*

Q26 What plans have you got to meet these priorities?

	FE/Tertiary	Sixth form	Specialist	Total
Training (general)	67 (46%)	25 (53%)	7 (41%)	99 (47%)
Training via outside agencies (including FEDA)	34 (23%)	10 (21%)	4 (24%)	48 (23%)
In-house training	26 (18%)	8 (17%)	6 (35%)	40 (19%)
Collaborative training with other colleges	16 (11%)	8 (17%)	1 (6%)	25 (12%)
Training needs analysis	18 (12%)	3 (6%)	3 (18%)	24 (11%)
Presentations from college managers	11 (8%)	4 (9%)	3 (18%)	18 (9%)
Handbook/ action papers/ newsletter, etc	12 (8%)	5 (11%)	-	17 (8%)
'Away day' training	12 (8%)	2 (4%)	1 (6%)	15 (7%)
Website/ intranet	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (1%)
Other	24 (16%)	4 (9%)	2 (12%)	30 (14%)
Non-responses	*29 (17%)*	*7 (13%)*	*2 (11%)*	*38 (15%)*

Appendix 3

Stage 2 questionnaire: Survey of governors

feda quality learning skills

THE CHANGING FACE OF COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

FEDA requests your co-operation in a major study of governing bodies of FE-sector colleges in England and Wales. The project is seeking to establish how the make-up and operation of governing bodies is changing in response to the Governments agenda for raising the standards of stewardship and accountability, and the reformed requirements for governing body membership. It also aims to review the associated developmental needs of governors, in the light of the support materials now in production by the Further Education Funding Council.

We request that as a college governor, you complete and return this questionnaire, which has also been sent to all other members of the governing body, as well as to governors at a sample of other colleges in England and Wales. This survey follows on from the questionnaire that was completed recently on behalf of the whole governing body. Your college has kindly agreed to co-operate with this second stage of the project. A further stage of this project is then scheduled to take place between November of this year and March 2001, when we will visit a smaller number of colleges to conduct interviews with governors and other key staff, and to identify examples of effective practice.

Please be assured that ***your answers will be treated confidentially*** *We will not release any information you supply in a form that could identify you personally, or your college of which you are a governor.*

Please complete the questionnaire that follows, answering the questions using a ***black pen*** *to mark the appropriate boxes like this ☑, or by writing in the spaces provided. When you have finished, seal the questionnaire in the FREEPOST envelope provided and send it back to us at the address indicated.*

Thank you for your help in this important survey.

Peter Davies

Peter Davies
Project Leader

BACKGROUND DETAILS

Q1 Please mark the boxes below as appropriate to indicate your own background.

Employment background

- ☐ Business
- ☐ Co-opted
- ☐ Local Authority
- ☐ Other educational institution
- ☐ Community organisation
- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Other(s) (please specify)

Gender

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Ethnicity

- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black
- ☐ White British
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Age

- ☐ 18 - 29
- ☐ 30 - 39
- ☐ 40 - 49
- ☐ 50 - 59
- ☐ 60 - 69
- ☐ 70+

Disability

Registered disabled? Yes ☐ No ☐

Employment status

Retired from FT employment? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q2 How long have you been a member of this college's governing body?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1 - 2 years
- ☐ 2 - 3 years
- ☐ More than three years

Q3 Do you have any other experience of board or governing body membership in. . .

		Past	Current
A school?		☐	☐
Another FE-sector college?		☐	☐
A university/HE institution?		☐	☐
Another public sector organisation?		☐	☐
A voluntary organisation?		☐	☐
A commercial education/training company	- as a director?	☐	☐
	- as a manager?	☐	☐
Another type of commercial company	- as a director?	☐	☐
	- as a manager?	☐	☐
Another type of organisation/body? (please specify)		☐	☐

Q4 Which areas of expertise are you able to contribute to the work of the governing body?

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Community needs
- ☐ Company management
- ☐ Employer training needs
- ☐ Financial management
- ☐ IT
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Local Authority planning
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ Personnel management
- ☐ Property management
- ☐ Other(s) (please specify)

Q5a) Please indicate the committees set up by the governing body, and those which you chair or of which you are a member.

(In cases where a sub-committee covers more than one of the areas listed below, please mark all relevant boxes)

	Set up	Chair	Member
Full governing body	☐	☐	☐
Audit committee	☐	☐	☐
Search committee	☐	☐	☐
Finance and employment policy committee	☐	☐	☐
Renumeration committee	☐	☐	☐
Standards committee (or equivalent)	☐	☐	☐
Other formal committees (please specify)	☐	☐	☐

Q5b) Which committee or committees is/are responsible for quality issues?

Q6 Which (if any) college working groups or ad hoc committees do you serve on?

- ☐ Appraisal
- ☐ Building & maintenance
- ☐ Curriculum policy
- ☐ Employer links
- ☐ Equal opportunities
- ☐ Learning support
- ☐ Other(s) (please specify)
- ☐ Quality assurance
- ☐ Staff development
- ☐ Self-assessment
- ☐ Student disciplinary procedures
- ☐ Student services
- ☐ Personnel

PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNORS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Q7 What were the main reasons why you became a college governor?
(Please mark boxes below as appropriate)

- ☐ To do my bit to support further education
- ☐ Because I felt my expertise would be of use
- ☐ To help ensure that the college is responsive to local employers
- ☐ To help ensure that the college is responsive to the local community
- ☐ To help further equal opportunities
- ☐ To ensure governing body awareness of staff views and concerns
- ☐ To ensure governing body awareness of student views and concerns
- ☐ In my capacity as Principal of the college
- ☐ Other(s) (please specify)

Q8 What level of priority do you feel your governing body attaches to the following aspects of the Corporation's business, and how effectively do you feel that each is dealt with?
*(Please mark boxes as appropriate, using the 5-point scale: on the left where **1 = Very low** and **5 = Very high**, and on the right where **1 = Very ineffectively** and **5 = Very effectively**)*

	Very low 1	2	3	4	Very high 5	Very ineffectively 1	2	3	4	Very effectively 5
Curriculum planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluating academic performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluating own performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Finance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mission	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personnel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Property	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality assurance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strategic planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Target setting (incl. use of benchmarks)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q9 To what extent do you feel that there should be changes in the levels of priority that your governing body attaches to the different aspects of its business?

	Higher priority	Lower priority	Same
Curriculum planning	☐	☐	☐
Evaluating academic performance	☐	☐	☐
Evaluating own performance	☐	☐	☐
Finance	☐	☐	☐
Mission	☐	☐	☐
Monitoring college progress toward achieving targets	☐	☐	☐
Personnel	☐	☐	☐
Property	☐	☐	☐
Quality assurance	☐	☐	☐
Strategic planning	☐	☐	☐
Target setting (incl. use of benchmarks)	☐	☐	☐

Q10 What are the main changes that you have observed in the composition and operation of your governing body over the past year?

Q11 To what extent do you feel that recent and planned changes in the composition and operation of your governing body have improved/will improve its effectiveness?
*(Please mark boxes as appropriate, using the 5-point scale where **1 = Not at all** and **5 = To a great extent**, and give reasons for your answer in the space below)*

Not at all				To a great extent
1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q12 What do you see as the key issues and problems for your governing body to tackle over the coming year?

EVALUATION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Q13 How satisfied are you that your governing body is provided with the right quantity and quality of information to enable it to perform effectively in the areas listed?
*(Please mark boxes as appropriate, using the 5-point scale where **1 = Very dissatisfied** and **5 = Very satisfied**, and indicate any improvements that you would recommend in the space below)*

	Very dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	Very satisfied 5
Educational performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employer needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Estates & equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Finance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personnel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q14 How effective do you consider your governing body to be in overseeing and directing the management and staff of the college?

*(Please mark boxes as appropriate, using the 5-point scale where **1 = Very ineffective** and **5 = Very effective** and indicate any improvements that you would recommend in the space below)*

Very ineffective				Very effective
1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q15 To what extent do you feel that your governing body makes effective use of your own experience and expertise?

*(Please mark boxes as appropriate, using the 5-point scale where **1 = Not at all** and **5 = To a great extent**, and indicate any improvements that you would recommend in the space below)*

Not at all				To a great extent
1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q16 Do you feel that there should be any changes in the levels of involvement of the office holders listed below in setting the agenda and contributing to meetings of your governing body?

	As at present	Increased involvement	Decreased involvement
Chair	☐	☐	☐
Principal	☐	☐	☐
Clerk	☐	☐	☐

Q17a) How does your governing body undertake self-assessment?

Q17b) Are there any ways in which you feel this process could be improved?

Q18 How fair and how helpful do you think the process of FEFC Inspection is in improving the quality of governance at this college?

*(Please mark boxes as appropriate, using the 5-point scale: on the left where **1 = Very unfair** and **5 = Very fair**, and on the right where **1 = Very unhelpful** and **5 = Very helpful**, and indicate any improvements that you would recommend in the space below. If you have not had direct experience of the Inspection process, please mark the **N/A** "not applicable" box).*

	Very unfair				Very fair		Very unhelpful				Very helpful	
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Curriculum planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluating academic performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluating own performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Finance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mission	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personnel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Property	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality assurance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strategic planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Target setting (incl. use of benchmarks)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT

Q19 In which areas of experience and expertise do you consider that your governing body requires strengthening?

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Community needs
- ☐ Company management
- ☐ Employer training needs
- ☐ Financial management
- ☐ IT
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Local Authority planning
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ Personnel management
- ☐ Property management
- ☐ Other(s) (please specify)

Q20 In which aspects of governance (if any) do you feel you have a need to develop your own abilities?

Q21 What opportunities have been made available for you to learn about the day-to-day work of the college, and how do you rate them?
(Please mark boxes below as appropriate to indicate the opportunities that are available at this college, those you have been involved in, and whether or not you found them to be worthwhile)

	Available	Involved	Worthwhile
Attachment to manager with cross-college role	☐	☐	☐
Attachment to a specific department/section	☐	☐	☐
Meetings with course teams	☐	☐	☐
Meetings with students	☐	☐	☐
Observation of classes	☐	☐	☐
Work shadowing of staff	☐	☐	☐
Other(s) (please specify)	☐	☐	☐

Q22 Please indicate below any formal governor development or training sessions you have attended in the past 12 months, and how you rated them?
*(Please enter details of sessions attended below, and then mark boxes as appropriate using the 5-point scale, where **1 = Very unhelpful** and **5 = Very helpful**)*

	Organiser	Topic(s) covered	Very unhelpful 1	2	3	4	Very helpful 5
1			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q23a) Which publications offering advice and guidance to governors do you see, and how helpful do you find them?
*(Please mark the **"See?"** box as appropriate, and where applicable also mark boxes using the 5-point scale, where **1 = Very unhelpful** and **5 = Very helpful**)*

	See?	Very unhelpful 1	2	3	4	Very helpful 5
Association of Colleges (AoC) Bulletins	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) Circulars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
FEFC Inspection Reports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
FEDA Publications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College Manager magazine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The College Governor pack (FEFC, March 2000)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q23b) Which other publications (if any) have you found of assistance in your role as a college governor?

Q24 Are there any other ways in which you and your fellow governors could be supported so as to be even more effective?

OVERALL

Q25 How has your experience of acting as a college governor compared with your expectations when you took up the appointment?

☐ Better ☐ Worse ☐ Same

Q26 What could be done further to improve the quality and effectiveness of governors like yourself?

By the college?

By government/government agencies?

By other organisations?

Q27 Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding your role as a governor or the quality of college governance in general?

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire

Please return it by **7th July** in the **FREEPOST** envelope provided to:
Graham Knight, Lead Research Officer, FEDA, BS 6745, London, SE11 5BR

Appendix 4

Breakdown of responses to Stage 2 questionnaire survey of governors

In the tables that follow, the responses to the questionnaire survey are shown in aggregate.

Under each question* are listed:

- the number of respondents who selected the answers indicated
- the percentage those numbers represent of the total number of respondents who answered the question concerned
- the number of those who failed to answer the question concerned (*non-responses*)
- the percentage those numbers represent of the total number of questionnaires returned by the group concerned.

Additionally, in the case of questions that employed a rating scale, the mean (average) rating is indicated.

(* No breakdown is provided in respect of the text-box responses to Questions 14, 15, 18 and 22, but summaries are included in the main body of the report.)

Background details

Q1 Please mark the boxes as appropriate to indicate your own background

Employment background	**No. (%)**
Business	169 (54%)
Coopted	14 (4%)
Local authority	26 (8%)
Other educational institution	26 (8%)
Community organisation	13 (4%)
Staff	30 (10%)
Student	5 (2%)
Parent	2 (1%)
Principal	18 (6%)
Other	13 (4%)
Non-responses	*7 (2%)*

Gender	**No. (%)**
Female	70 (22%)
Male	248 (78%)
Non-responses	*5 (2%)*

Ethnicity	**No. (%)**
Asian	4 (1%)
Black	3 (1%)
White British	289 (95%)
Other	8 (3%)
Non-responses	*19 (6%)*

Age	**No. (%)**
18–29	3 (1%)
30–39	20 (6%)
40–49	73 (23%)
50–59	131 (41%)
60–69	85 (27%)
70+	7 (2%)
Non-responses	*4 (1%)*

Registered disabled	**No. (%)**
Yes	2 (1%)
No	290 (99%)
Non-responses	*31 (10%)*

Retired	**No. (%)**
Yes	96 (31%)
No	215 (69%)
Non-responses	*12 (4%)*

Q2 How long have you been a member of this college's governing body?

Length of service	No. (%)
Less than a year	52 (16%)
1–2 years	56 (18%)
2–3 years	45 (14%)
More than 3 years	167 (52%)
Non-responses	*3 (1%)*

Q3 Do you have any other experience of board or governing body membership in...

Type of organisation	Past No. %	Current No. %
A school?	67 (21%)	53 (16%)
Another FE-sector college?	25 (8%)	7 (2%)
A university/HE institution?	14 (4%)	9 (3%)
Another public sector organisation?	52 (16%)	56 (17%)
A voluntary organisation?	54 (17%)	72 (22%)
A commercial education training company – as a director	18 (6%)	21 (7%)
A commercial education training company – as a manager	10 (3%)	6 (2%)
Another type of commercial company – as a director	59 (18%)	63 (20%)
Another type of commercial company – as a manager	31 (10%)	28 (9%)
Another type of organisation/body	26 (8%)	41 (13%)
Non-responses	-	-

Q4 Which areas of expertise are you able to contribute to the work of the governing body?

Area of expertise	No. (%)
Education	131 (41%)
Law	38 (12%)
Community needs	107 (34%)
Local authority planning	42 (13%)
Company management	155 (49%)
Marketing	71 (22%)
Employer training needs	102 (32%)
Personnel management	123 (39%)
Financial management	121 (38%)
Property management	69 (22%)
IT	48 (15%)
Other	31 (10%)
Non-responses	*5 (2%)*

Q5a) Please indicate the committees set up by the governing body, and those which you chair or of which you are a member

Committee	Set up No. %	Chair No. %	Member No. %
Full governing body	186 (57%)	31 (10%)	244 (76%)
Audit	184 (57%)	20 (6%)	67 (21%)
Search	185 (57%)	25 (8%)	78 (24%)
Finance and employment policy	175 (54%)	28 (9%)	107 (33%)
Remuneration	169 (52%)	24 (7%)	72 (22%)
Standards	130 (40%)	16 (5%)	57 (18%)
Other	84 (26%)	24 (7%)	67 (21%)
Non-responses	-	-	-

Q5b) Which committee or committees is/are responsible for quality issues?

Committee	No. (%)
Committee incorporating 'quality' in title	95 (35%)
Audit	45 (17%)
Curriculum	26 (10%)
Employment policy	3 (1%)
Finance (and general purposes)	34 (13%)
HR/personnel	10 (4%)
Search	8 (3%)
Standards	51 (19%)
Strategic planning	9 (3%)
Full governing body	26 (10%)
Other	69 (26%)
Non-responses	*53 (16%)*

Q6 Which (if any) college working groups or *ad hoc* committees do you serve on?

Working group/*ad hoc* committee	No. (%)
Appraisal	30 (17%)
Quality assurance	35 (20%)
Building and maintenance	44 (25%)
Staff development	16 (9%)
Curriculum policy	34 (19%)
Self-assessment	51 (29%)
Employer links	15 (9%)
Student disciplinary procedures	27 (15%)
Equal opportunities	21 (12%)
Student services	18 (10%)
Learning support	4 (2%)
Personnel	40 (23%)
Other	32 (18%)
Non-responses	*146 (45%)*

Q7 What were the main reasons why you became a college governor?

Reason	No. (%)
To do my bit to support further education	191 (60%)
Because I felt my expertise would be of use	241 (76%)
To help ensure that the college is responsive to local employers	93 (29%)
To help ensure that the college is responsive to the local community	124 (39%)
To help further equal opportunities	42 (13%)
To ensure governing body awareness of staff views and concerns	44 (14%)
To ensure governing body awareness of student views and concerns	28 (9%)
In my capacity as principal of the college	19 (6%)
Other	29 (9%)
Non-responses	*5 (2%)*

Q8 What level of priority do you feel your governing body attaches to the following aspects of the corporation's business, and how effectively do you feel that each is dealt with?

Curriculum planning	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	No. %	No. %
1 Very low/very ineffectively	7 (2%)	8 (3%)
2	35 (12%)	25 (9%)
3	69 (23%)	102 (35%)
4	113 (38%)	122 (41%)
5 Very high/very effectively	76 (25%)	38 (13%)
Mean	3.70	3.53
Non-responses	*23 (7%)*	*28 (9%)*

Evaluating academic performance	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	No. %	No. %
1 Very low/very ineffectively	-	2 (1%)
2	13 (4%)	19 (7%)
3	55 (18%)	97 (33%)
4	129 (43%)	130 (45%)
5 Very high/very effectively	102 (34%)	44 (15%)
Mean	4.07	3.67
Non-responses	*24 (7%)*	*31 (10%)*

Evaluating own performance	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	No. %	No. %
1 Very low/very ineffectively	-	-
2	17 (6%)	19 (7%)
3	57 (19%)	98 (34%)
4	135 (46%)	130 (46%)
5 Very high/very effectively	87 (29%)	45 (15%)
Mean	3.98	3.69
Non-responses	*27 (8%)*	*31 (10%)*

Finance	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very low/very ineffectively	-	1 (-%)
2	-	3 (1%)
3	9 (3%)	35 (12%)
4	53 (18%)	97 (33%)
5 Very high/very effectively	241 (80%)	162 (54%)
Mean	4.77	4.39
Non-responses	*20 (6%)*	*25 (8%)*

Mission	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very low/very ineffectively	2 (1%)	-
2	3 (1%)	9 (3%)
3	48 (16%)	72 (25%)
4	116 (39%)	121 (42%)
5 Very high/very effectively	127 (43%)	87 (30%)
Mean	4.23	4.01
Non-responses	*27 (8%)*	*34 (11%)*

Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very low/very ineffectively	-	-
2	4 (1%)	11 (4%)
3	22 (7%)	70 (24%)
4	125 (42%)	130 (44%)
5 Very high/very effectively	150 (50%)	83 (28%)
Mean	4.40	3.98
Non-responses	*22 (7%)*	*29 (9%)*

Personnel	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very low/very ineffectively	2 (1%)	2 (1%)
2	13 (4%)	23 (8%)
3	68 (23%)	89 (30%)
4	143 (47%)	129 (44%)
5 Very high/very effectively	76 (25%)	53 (18%)
Mean	3.95	3.72
Non-responses	*21 (7%)*	*27 (8%)*

Property	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very low/very ineffectively	1 (-%)	1 (-%)
2	-	6 (2%)
3	45 (15%)	65 (22%)
4	140 (47%)	128 (43%)
5 Very high/very effectively	114 (38%)	95 (32%)
Mean	4.22	4.06
Non-responses	*23 (7%)*	*28 (9%)*

Quality assurance	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very low/very ineffectively	1 (-%)	1 (-%)
2	3 (1%)	18 (6%)
3	53 (18%)	78 (26%)
4	129 (43%)	137 (46%)
5 Very high/very effectively	115 (38%)	63 (21%)
Mean	4.17	3.83
Non-responses	*22 (7%)*	*26 (8%)*

Strategic planning	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very low/very ineffectively	1 (-%)	1 (-%)
2	2 (1%)	13 (4%)
3	28 (9%)	60 (20%)
4	106 (35%)	129 (43%)
5 Very high/very effectively	166 (55%)	95 (32%)
Mean	4.46	4.04
Non-responses	*20 (6%)*	*25 (8%)*

Target setting (including use of benchmarks)	Priority	Effectiveness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very low/very ineffectively	1 (-%)	-
2	9 (3%)	31 (10%)
3	72 (24%)	93 (31%)
4	140 (47%)	127 (43%)
5 Very high/very effectively	79 (26%)	46 (16%)
Mean	3.97	3.63
Non-responses	*22 (7%)*	*26 (8%)*

Q9 To what extent do you feel that there should be changes in the levels of priority that your governing body attaches to the different aspects of its business?

Aspect	Higher No. %	Lower No. %	Same No. %
Curriculum planning	109 (37%)	1 (-%)	186 (63%)
Evaluating academic performance	104 (35%)	2 (1%)	191 (64%)
Evaluating own performance	94 (31%)	18 (6%)	187 (63%)
Finance	23 (8%)	6 (2%)	268 (90%)
Mission	43 (15%)	7 (2%)	243 (83%)
Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	96 (32%)	2 (1%)	199 (67%)
Personnel	85 (29%)	8 (3%)	203 (69%)
Property	31 (10%)	22 (7%)	244 (82%)
Quality assurance	95 (32%)	3 (1%)	200 (67%)
Strategic planning	83 (28%)	3 (1%)	215 (71%)
Target setting (including use of benchmarks)	104 (35%)	3 (1%)	188 (64%)
Non-responses	*22 (7%)*	*22 (7%)*	*22 (7%)*

Q10 What are the main changes that you have observed in the composition and operation of your governing body over the past year?

Changes	No. %
Balance of membership	195 (70%)
Better attendance/participation	18 (7%)
More attention to targets/forecasting/outcomes/achievements	24 (9%)
More attention to self-assessment/monitoring	18 (7%)
Few/no changes	16 (6%)
Other	115 (42%)
Non-responses	*46 (14%)*

Q11 To what extent do you feel that recent and planned changes in the composition and operation of your governing body have improved/will improve its effectiveness?

Rating	No. %
1 Not at all	59 (20%)
2	32 (11%)
3	67 (23%)
4	96 (33%)
5 To a great extent	39 (13%)
Mean	3.01
Non-responses	*30 (9%)*

Q12 What do you see as the key issues and problems for your governing body to tackle over the coming year?

Issues/problems	No. %
Curriculum 2000	6 (10%)
Funding	28 (45%)
Inspection	8 (13%)
Infrastructure/accommodation	15 (24%)
Impact of LSCs	16 (26%)
Improved community responsiveness	8 (13%)
Improved quality	3 (5%)
Raising student achievement	6 (10%)
Staff relations	4 (7%)
Strategic direction	5 (8%)
Uncompetitive lecturer salaries	2 (3%)
Other	36 (58%)
Non-responses	*261 (81%)*

Evaluation and self-assessment

Q13 How satisfied are you that your governing body is provided with the right quantity and quality of information to enable it to perform effectively in the areas listed?

Educational performance	No. %
1 Very dissatisfied	2 (1%)
2	17 (6%)
3	70 (23%)
4	108 (35%)
5 Very satisfied	114 (37%)
Mean	4.03
Non-responses	*12 (4%)*

Community needs	No. %
1 Very dissatisfied	3 (1%)
2	37 (12%)
3	136 (44%)
4	88 (28%)
5 Very satisfied	48 (15%)
Mean	3.46
Non-responses	*11 (3%)*

Employer needs	No. %
1 Very dissatisfied	3 (1%)
2	41 (13%)
3	127 (42%)
4	98 (32%)
5 Very satisfied	37 (12%)
Mean	3.42
Non-responses	*17 (5%)*

Estates and equipment	No. %
1 Very dissatisfied	3 (1%)
2	6 (2%)
3	59 (19%)
4	133 (43%)
5 Very satisfied	108 (35%)
Mean	4.11
Non-responses	*14 (4%)*

Finance	No. %
1 Very dissatisfied	1 (-%)
2	5 (2%)
3	26 (8%)
4	90 (29%)
5 Very satisfied	189 (61%)
Mean	4.50
Non-responses	*12 (4%)*

Personnel	No. %
1 Very dissatisfied	4 (1%)
2	15 (5%)
3	74 (24%)
4	116 (37%)
5 Very satisfied	101 (33%)
Mean	3.98
Non-responses	*13 (4%)*

Q14 How effective do you consider your governing body to be in overseeing and directing the management and staff of the college?

Rating	No. %
1 Very ineffective	2 (1%)
2	22 (7%)
3	61 (20%)
4	145 (47%)
5 Very effective	79 (26%)
Mean	3.91
Non-responses	*14 (4%)*

Q15 To what extent do you feel that your governing body makes effective use of your own experience and expertise?

Rating	No. %
1 Not at all	7 (2%)
2	15 (5%)
3	43 (14%)
4	134 (43%)
5 To a great extent	113 (36%)
Mean	4.07
Non-responses	*11 (3%)*

Q16 Do you feel that there should be any changes in the levels of involvement of the office holders listed below in setting the agenda and contributing to the meetings of your governing body?

Office holder	As at present No. %	Increased involvement No. %	Decreased involvement No. %
Chair	276 (90%)	17 (6%)	15 (5%)
Principal	274 (89%)	10 (3%)	23 (8%)
Clerk	280 (91%)	18 (6%)	9 (3%)
Non-responses	*22 (7%)*	*22 (7%)*	*22 (7%)*

Q17a) How does your governing body undertake self-assessment?

Method	No. %
Advice from sub-committees	35 (14%)
Annual review against targets	57 (22%)
Discussion at meetings of full governing body	46 (18%)
Outside advisers/training days	46 (18%)
Skills audit	5 (2%)
Specific working parties	9 (4%)
Survey of members	100 (39%)
Other	145 (57%)
Non-responses	*69 (21%)*

Q17b) Are there any ways in which you feel this process could be improved?

Improvements	No. %
Better evidence on which to base decisions	1(1%)
More frequent consideration/more time	13 (6%)
More precise targets/benchmarks	15 (7%)
More recognition of need for community responsiveness	1 (1%)
Process should be reviewed	10 (5%)
Standardisation of approaches to avoid inter-college duplication	1 (1%)
Use of best practice examples	4 (2%)
Not sure/too early to tell	31 (15%)
None	66 (33%)
Other	121 (37%)
Non-responses	*12 (4%)*

Q18 How fair and how helpful do you think the process of FEFC inspection is in improving the quality of governance at this college?

Curriculum planning	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	No. %	No. %
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	1 (1%)	3 (1%)
2	6 (2%)	14 (6%)
3	73 (29%)	83 (35%)
4	87 (34%)	55 (23%)
5 Very high/very helpful	30 (12%)	26 (11%)
N/A	57 (22%)	57 (24%)
Mean	3.73	3.48
Non-responses	*85 (26%)*	*85 (26%)*

Evaluating academic performance	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	No. %	No. %
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	2 (1%)	4 (2%)
2	10 (5%)	18 (7%)
3	65 (32%)	70 (29%)
4	84 (42%)	68 (28%)
5 Very high/very helpful	40 (20%)	32 (13%)
N/A	51 (21%)	51 (21%)
Mean	3.75	3.55
Non-responses	*80 (25%)*	*80 (25%)*

Evaluating own performance	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	No. %	No. %
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	7 (4%)	5 (2%)
2	11 (5%)	19 (8%)
3	75 (37%)	74 (31%)
4	72 (36%)	61 (25%)
5 Very high/very helpful	37 (18%)	37 (15%)
N/A	44 (18%)	44 (18%)
Mean	3.60	3.54
Non-responses	*83 (26%)*	*83 (26%)*

Finance	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	No. %	No. %
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	5 (2%)	6 (3%)
2	9 (4%)	22 (9%)
3	66 (32%)	79 (33%)
4	81 (40%)	53 (22%)
5 Very high/very helpful	44 (22%)	40 (17%)
N/A	42 (17%)	42 (17%)
Mean	3.73	3.49
Non-responses	*81 (25%)*	*81 (25%)*

Mission	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	3 (2%)	6 (3%)
2	5 (3%)	13 (6%)
3	75 (39%)	89 (38%)
4	77 (40%)	50 (21%)
5 Very high/very helpful	35 (18%)	30 (13%)
N/A	49 (21%)	49 (21%)
Mean	3.71	3.42
Non-responses	*86 (27%)*	*86 (27%)*

Monitoring college progress towards achieving targets	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	1 (1%)	4 (2%)
2	13 (6%)	20 (8%)
3	63 (31%)	64 (27%)
4	94 (46%)	67 (28%)
5 Very high/very helpful	34 (17%)	36 (15%)
N/A	47 (20%)	47 (20%
Mean	3.71	3.58
Non-responses	*85 (26%)*	*85 (26%)*

Personnel	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	1 (1%)	4 (2%)
2	6 (3%)	16 (7%)
3	84 (43%)	97 (41%)
4	77 (40%)	41 (17%)
5 Very high/very helpful	26 (13%)	29 (12%)
N/A	50 (21%)	50 (21%)
Mean	3.64	3.42
Non-responses	*86 (27%)*	*86 (27%)*

Property	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	3 (2%)	7 (3%)
2	13 (7%)	22 (9%)
3	85 (44%)	88 (37%)
4	62 (32%)	37 (16%)
5 Very high/very helpful	31 (16%)	33 (14%)
N/A	52 (22%)	52 (22%)
Mean	3.53	3.35
Non-responses	*84 (26%)*	*84 (26%)*

Quality assurance	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	3 (2%)	6 (3%)
2	7 (4%)	17 (7%)
3	71 (35%)	65 (27%)
4	86 (43%)	63 (26%)
5 Very high/very helpful	35 (17%)	45 (19%)
N/A	45 (19%)	45 (19%)
Mean	3.70	3.63
Non-responses	*82 (25%)*	*82 (25%)*

Strategic planning	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	2 (1%)	8 (3%)
2	9 (5%)	13 (5%)
3	66 (33%)	77 (32%)
4	90 (45%)	59 (25%)
5 Very high/very helpful	34 (17%)	36 (15%)
N/A	46 (19%)	46 (19%)
Mean	3.70	3.50
Non-responses	*84 (26%)*	*84 (26%)*

Target setting (including use of benchmarks)	Fairness	Helpfulness
Rating	**No. %**	**No. %**
1 Very unfair/very unhelpful	1 (1%)	7 (3%)
2	7 (4%)	12 (5%)
3	75 (39%)	75 (32%)
4	79 (41%)	54 (23%)
5 Very high/very helpful	31 (16%)	38 (16%)
N/A	50 (21%)	50 (21%)
Mean	3.69	3.57
Non-responses	*87 (27%)*	*87 (27%)*

Governor development

Q19 In which areas of experience and expertise do you consider that your governing body requires strengthening?

Area	No. (%)
Education	53 (21%)
Law	54 (21%)
Community needs	91 (36%)
Local authority planning	28 (11%)
Company management	28 (11%)
Marketing	111 (43%)
Employer training needs	70 (27%)
Personnel management	49 (19%)
Financial management	29 (11%)
Property management	24 (9%)
IT	66 (26%)
Other	20 (8%)
Non-responses	*67 (21%)*

Q20 In which aspects of governance (if any) do you feel you have a need to develop your own abilities?

Aspects	No. %
Audit	6 (3%)
Benchmarking/performance indicators	8 (4%)
Community needs	9 (5%)
Curriculum/educational issues	40 (21%)
Employer needs	1 (1%)
Enterprise/commercial development	2 (1%)
FEFC procedures	10 (5%)
Finance/funding	53 (28%)
IT	11 (6%)
Law	12 (6%)
Marketing	6 (3%)
Personnel	6 (3%)
Property	3 (2%)
Quality and standards	8 (4%)
Role of governors	2 (1%)
Role of staff governors	1 (1%)
Strategy	5 (3%)
Understanding of FE sector	13 (7%)
None	20 (11%)
Other	56 (29%)
Non-responses	*132 (41%)*

Q21 What opportunities have been made available for you to learn about the day-to-day work of the college, and how do you rate them?

Opportunity	Available No. %	Involved No. %	WorthwhileNo. %
Attachment to a manager with a cross-college role	111 (74%)	33 (22%)	7 (5%)
Attachment to a specific department/section	116 (73%)	36 (23%)	7 (4%)
Meetings with course teams	106 (77%)	21 (15%)	10 (7%)
Meetings with students	112 (78%)	22 (15%)	10 (7%)
Observation of classes	82 (82%)	10 (10%)	8 (8%)
Work shadowing of staff	52 (81%)	5 (8%)	7 (11%)
Other(s)	33 (75%)	9 (21%)	2 (5%)
Non-responses	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

Q22 Please indicate below any formal governor development or training sessions you have attended in the past 12 months, and how you rated them

Session 1	No. %
1 Very unhelpful	7 (4%)
2	11 (6%)
3	18 (10%)
4	60 (32%)
5 Very helpful	91 (49%)
Mean	4.15
Non-responses	*136 (42%)*

Session 2	No. %
1 Very unhelpful	3 (3%)
2	7 (7%)
3	6 (6%)
4	34 (36%)
5 Very helpful	44 (47%)
Mean	4.17
Non-responses	*229 (71%)*

Session 3	No. %
1 Very unhelpful	2 (5%)
2	5 (12%)
3	2 (5%)
4	14 (33%)
5 Very helpful	19 (45%)
Mean	4.08
Non-responses	*281 (87%)*

Q23a) Which publications offering advice and guidance to governors do you see, and how helpful do you find them?

Association of Colleges (AoC) bulletins	No. %
See?	163 (59%)
1 Very unhelpful	4 (2%)
2	14 (8%)
3	68 (40%)
4	56 (33%)
5 Very helpful	28 (17%)
Mean	3.55
Non-responses	*153 (47%)*

Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) circulars	No. %
See?	207 (75%)
1 Very unhelpful	9 (4%)
2	20 (9%)
3	86 (40%)
4	71 (33%)
5 Very helpful	27 (13%)
Mean	3.38
Non-responses	*110 (34%)*

FEFC inspection reports	No. %
See?	205 (74%)
1 Very unhelpful	4 (2%)
2	7 (3%)
3	62 (30%)
4	79 (38%)
5 Very helpful	56 (27%)
Mean	3.86
Non-responses	*115 (36%)*

FEDA publications	No. %
See?	137 (49%)
1 Very unhelpful	2 (1%)
2	12 (8%)
3	61 (43%)
4	48 (34%)
5 Very helpful	20 (14%)
Mean	3.49
Non-responses	*180 (56%)*

College Manager magazine	No. %
See?	130 (47%)
1 Very unhelpful	2 (2%)
2	14 (11%)
3	53 (41%)
4	48 (37%)
5 Very helpful	14 (11%)
Mean	3.41
Non-responses	*192 (59%)*

The College Governor pack (FEFC, March 2000)	No. %
See?	209 (75%)
1 Very unhelpful	4 (2%)
2	12 (6%)
3	55 (26%)
4	76 (36%)
5 Very helpful	64 (30%)
Mean	3.84
Non-responses	*112 (35%)*

Q23b) Which other publications (if any) have you found of assistance in your role as a college governor?

Publications	No. %
Association of Community College Trustees publications	1 (1%)
Clerks' guide	1 (1%)
Colleges' own newsletters and other publications	22 (19%)
DfEE publications	8 (7%)
Education Guardian	6 (5%)
Eversheds briefing notes	1 (1%)
FE Now	25 (21%)
Instruments and articles of government	2 (2%)
National Audit Office reports	2 (2%)
NATFHE publications	1 (1%)
Sixth Form College Employers' Forum publications	1 (1%)
Times Educational Supplement	22 (19%)
None	11 (9%)
Other	50 (42%)
Non-responses	*204 (63%)*

Q24 Are there any other ways in which you and your fellow governors could be supported so as to be even more effective?

Means of improved support	No. %
Funding – more money/clearer formula/more stability	8 (7%)
Guidance on benchmarking	4 (3%)
Guidance on standards	2 (2%)
Improved FEFC timescales	1 (1%)
More explicit definition of governors' role	5 (4%)
National conferences	2 (2%)
Online discussion groups	2 (2%)
Payment/reimbursement	7 (6%)
Reduction in responsibilities/red tape/paperwork	17 (14%)
Sharing information between colleges	16 (13%)
Time allowances for staff governors	1 (1%)
Training sessions	21 (17%)
Other	62 (51%)
Non-responses	*202 (63%)*

Overall

Q25 How has your experience of acting as a college governor compared with your expectations when you took up the appointment?

Experience compared with expectations	No. %
Better	169 (55%)
Worse	35 (11%)
Same	104 (34%)
Non-responses	*15 (5%)*

Q26 What could be done further to improve the quality and effectiveness of governors like yourself?

By the college?

Actions	No. %
Better cooperation with other local providers	2 (1%)
Better documentation/information	26 (17%)
Better (informal) communications (including with staff and students)	21 (13%)
Fewer/shorter meetings	7 (5%)
Full financial information at governing-body meetings – not just finance and general purpose committee meetings	1 (1%)
More training/workshops	39 (25%)
Reduction in paperwork	10 (6%)
Regular audit of needs	1 (1%)
Better participation by all governors	8 (5%)
Very little/nothing	29 (18%)
Other	51 (33%)
Non-responses	*166 (52%)*

By government/government agencies?

Actions	No. %
Better/clearer/simpler communications	24 (13%)
Improve quality of FEFC personnel	1 (1%)
Improve FEFC requirements for performance against targets	1 (1%)
More stability in systems/funding, etc	21 (11%)
Less interference/increased governor autonomy	12 (7%)
Less prescriptive guidance	8 (4%)
More explicit guidance	15 (8%)
More/better benchmarking	2 (1%)
More encouragement and appreciation	16 (9%)
More training provision	29 (16%)
Reduced jargon	3 (2%)
Reduced red-tape	9 (5%)
Remuneration/time off for governors	10 (5%)
Very little/nothing	6 (3%)
Other	77 (42%)
Non-responses	*139 (43%)*

By other organisations?

Actions	No. %
Improved coordination/consistency of advice and guidance	2 (3%)
More involvement of employers/chambers of commerce	21 (32%)
More encouragement/respect	3 (5%)
More/better training opportunities	9 (14%)
Provision of digests of information	6 (9%)
Nothing	7 (11%)
Other	17 (26%)
Non-responses	*258 (80%)*

Q27 Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding your role as a governor or the quality of college governance in general?

Comments	No. %
Remuneration required	13 (8%)
Clerk has key role – should be full-time responsibility with training provided	1 (1%)
Danger that reduction in numbers of business governors will reduce effectiveness of governors	1 (1%)
Enjoyable/challenging experience	25 (16%)
Improvement in amount and clarity of funding allocation	6 (4%)
Good-quality governance experienced	19 (12%)
Government/FEFC have unrealistically high expectations	13 (8%)
Need for independent governors' organisation	1 (1%)
Need for more open governance	2 (1%)
Need to reduce documentation/red tape	8 (5%)
Staff governors are excluded from real decision-making	3 (2%)
Time constraints	30 (19%)
Too early to say	11 (7%)
Other	81 (51%)
Non-responses	*163 (50%)*

Appendix 5

Stage 3: Checklist of interview questions for college visits

Composition of governing body

- How has the governing body changed in response to the new requirements? What further changes are in the pipeline? *(Confirm against details in Stage 1 questionnaire response)*
- What do you regard as an ideal composition, and what difficulties are there in obtaining it?
- What impact have the newly appointed governors had on the operation and effectiveness of the governing body?
- Which areas of expertise are most in need of strengthening within the governing body?
- Is there any difficulty in balancing the need for specific expertise against the requirement to represent different interest groups?

Role of governing body

- What, in your view, are the key roles of a governing body?
- What, in your view, is the appropriate relationship between governance and management? And between the chair and the principal? Is it set out and reviewed in this college?
- Is it understood and shared between all concerned in this college?
- What do you see as the main roles of the clerk?
- What do you see as the role of governors in serving the interests of employers and the local community?
- Should/do governors communicate and consult directly with staff and students? If so, how?
- Should governors be remunerated for their work? All, or just chairs of governing body and its committees? If so, how much?
- Have there been any changes in the way the governors of this college view their role? Have new members of the governing body had any impact?
- Are there any differences of opinion concerning the role of the governing body?

Operations

- Has the governing body changed its method of working in the light of the current changes in the Instruments and Articles – for example, in terms of the number of committees and number of meetings?
- What implications are there for the time spent on governor and clerking duties?
- How is the agenda set for governing body meetings? Can items be placed on the agenda at the request of individual governors? (*Examples?*)
- How are the specific responsibilities of governors determined? How are they held accountable?
- Are further changes necessary in order to improve the operation of the governing body?

Determination of college policy

- How are governors actively involved in determining the strategic direction of the college – including the future curriculum offer?
- How are the different interests present within the governing body – eg community; employers, staff, students etc – reflected appropriately in strategic planning decisions? (*Examples?*)
- How do you anticipate that the forthcoming establishment of LSCs will affect the strategic direction of the college (eg the college delivering an LSC plan rather than the LSC funding a college-determined plan?)

Monitoring and evaluation of college performance

- How do governors endeavour to monitor and evaluate college performance, and how effective are they? (*Probe for evidence of effective evaluation of academic performance)*
- How closely are governors involved in target setting and in monitoring performance against targets?
- What kinds of documentation does the governing body receive in order to undertake these roles effectively? (*Probe for evidence of clear and shared criteria for evaluating performance. Ask clerk for examples of documentation*).
- Can you give examples of monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the governing body leading to it directing senior management to take remedial action(s)? Has this happened more often in recent times?
- What improvements have been made in these areas? Are any further improvements needed?

Evaluation of own performance

- How does the governing body measure its own performance?
- Can you give examples of how you demonstrate that the governing body is adding value to the college?
- In the process of self-assessment, what use is made of benchmarking – with governing bodies in other colleges? – in other types of organisation?
- What improvement has been made in this area, and are any further improvements needed?
- How, if at all, do you think the forthcoming changes in the inspection framework might influence the importance or nature of the self-assessment process?

Development needs

- What are the main priority areas for support for your governing body in the form of advice, guidance, training etc?
- How have developmental needs been identified?
- How are you attempting to meet these needs, and how could matters be improved?
- How have these priorities changed in recent times? How do you anticipate them changing in future?
- What are your personal priorities for help with your own performance as a governor? How might matters be improved?

Overall

- What made you become a governor?
- What are the best things about being a governor? And the worst?
- Of which achievements of the governing body are you most proud?
- Have your reasons and expectations been fulfilled?
- How would you define effective governance?
- Do you feel that your governing body is doing an effective job? (*Probe for evidence to support judgement)*
- Has the quality of governance improved at this college in recent times? What would help to make it even more effective?
- Are there any other points that you would like to make about college governance and the changes that are affecting it?

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